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PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION,

DRAWN FROM

NATURE AND REVELATION,

AND APPLIED TO

FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE UPPER CLASSES.

376

BY

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AND OTHER TALES;

"THE FIRST HISTORY OF ROME;" "HISTORY OF GREECE;" "ANCIENT HISTORY OF EGYPT, BABYLON, AND ASSYRIA;" "HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH;" ETC. ETC.

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PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION.

CHAPTER I.

PRIDE.

THERE is another fault as common as Selfishness, and perhaps even more dangerous, which will also find its corrective in the principle of truth.

Who of us has not at times felt tempted to be proud of Pride? And to be proud of a fault is to cherish an insurmountable obstacle to its subdual.

Here, again, the mistake lies in a confusion of ideas. Self-love is innocent. Selfishness is not. We confound the two, and bring ourselves into perplexity and error. In like manner, self-respect is good; pride is evil. We do not trouble ourselves to distinguish between them; and cherish a vice, whilst we think we are upholding a virtue.

But it may be said, the distinction is so subtle, it can scarcely be perceived.

Not so. The distinction is evident, if we will only try the two classes of feeling by the right test. Truth is the spear of Ithuriel, which will compel pride to show itself in its deformity.

This, however, requires illustration and explanation.

A person who is accused of acting from a wrong motive, when he knows that his only wish was to do right, may justly maintain his innocence, at least as regards intention. It is his treasure, a fact, which being true, he is called upon to assert. And he may also be indignant at having a wrong motive imputed to him, for the feeling thus excited is not pride at all, it is simply self-respect.

But a person who is conscious of this wrong motive, has no such treasure of innocence to guard. His sole remaining dignity is the acknowledgment of having done wrong, for such acknowledgment is truth. When, therefore, he refuses to own his fault, his feeling is pride, and pride is a sin and degradation. The rule holds good in all cases, where acknowledgment of a fault or a misdeed is required. As soon as conscience whispers that we have done wrong, or in any way been mistaken, it matters not whether we are more or less in fault than others—the refusal to own the fact is pride.

Very difficult it is to make children see this, and if pride has been allowed to grow up unchecked, it will strengthen with years, till at length it becomes almost impossible to eradicate it. Men and women will continually show by silent action, that they are aware of having been in the wrong, but perhaps not more than one in a hundred possesses the true nobleness of mind, which leads to the acknowledgment in words. It is strange that it should be so, for we must all be aware of the effect which honourable confession of having been in

error, or mistaken, produces. We all know how, in an instant, it changes the current of angry feelings, how it blots out past unkindness, and induces us to throw a veil over any lingering weakness; more than this, how unconsciously it engenders a feeling of respect.

We are aware of all this, indeed, with others, but we cannot believe it to be so with ourselves; or rather, Satan tempts us with his own special favourite sin, and, blinding our eyes, prevents us from seeing that the recognition of truth must, in itself, be honourable, even though it may humble us to the dust; whilst the refusal to recognize it must be despicable, though it may seem to maintain us in a position of superiority.

And herein lies the secret of true humility. It is sometimes supposed that, to be really humble, it is necessary to view our faults in an extreme, exaggerated light. It is no such thing. Humility is truth, nothing more nor less. If it were otherwise, could it be required by the God of Truth? It is because of our intense blindness, and ignorance, and self-deceit, that we are ever anything but humble; and if we will only aim at seeing ourselves perfectly truly, owning what is good in ourselves, just as thoroughly as we do what is bad, we shall have made the first and most important step towards humility, because we shall have made it in the way of truth. The miserable nothingness of our best actions, the paltry weakness which mingles with, or follows them, the infinite distance between our goodness and God's perfection—it is very helpful, very salutary, to realize all this; but, in order to do it, we

must see all our actions in their rightful proportions. It is "distance which lends enchantment to the view" which we take of ourselves. Look more closely, and the enchantment will cease. If we can, therefore, teach children from infancy to value truth above all things, we shall find that we have engaged the support of a most powerful weapon against the pride which refuses to own itself in the wrong; and though it may submit in action, cannot bring itself to acknowledgment in words. The lesson is to be inculcated less by compulsion than by the respect shown to candour and humility. If a child refuses to own that she has been in fault, it is in vain to insist upon her doing so. A sullen acknowledgment, extorted by the dread of punishment, is valueless. Under such circumstances, we have nothing to do but to show by our manner that our esteem is lessened. Quiet coldness and indifference will often be efficacious, when exhortation and reproof will fail. But we must never be tempted to accept the acknowledgment shown by action in lieu of that of words. It is often an easy mode of escaping a difficulty, but it will be fatal to the child's future good. Heart-burnings, rancour, bitter memories, will all be laid up in store for the after years of those who have never learnt to say in open, honest, honourable words, "I was wrong." The practical atonement of a life will never have the effect of that one short sentence.

"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin."[1]

[1] 2 Sam. xii. 13.

And this acknowledgment, it must be remembered, cannot be allowed to be comparative. Two children quarrel—the dispute is brought before the mother—one will perhaps own herself to have been in fault, but she cannot be induced to come forward and make an apology, because the provocation was greater on the other side. This kind of excuse must at once be stopped. In so far as she was wrong, the acknowledgment is demanded. The amount of offence on the other side does not affect her duty. This is the way to carry out the apostolic command. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."[1]

But there are other forms of pride besides that which exhibits itself in the refusal to acknowledge a fault. Pride of family and station, and pride of talent, or conceit, are equally common, though perhaps less generally condemned. The former, indeed, is looked upon as a kind of natural weakness; the world may scoff at it behind its back, but it does homage before its face. We often find it even considered as an heirloom, a family inheritance, which, like some peculiarity of form or feature, though not in itself to be admired, is still worthy of respect from its antiquity. The names of particular individuals are associated with it, and they are spoken of as excellent, delightful, admirable, and with only the one pardonable weakness belonging to the family—pride.

When this pride exists in the elders of a family, it is almost hopeless to attempt to root it out in the

[1] Rom. xii. 18.

children, or even to lessen it, by any other means than that one great counteractive to all folly—truth.

It is perfectly true that God has implanted in us a regard for social distinction, even independent of moral worth. It is equally true that this distinction can be handed down from parents to children, and that the longer it has lasted the more valuable in the eyes of the world it becomes. This fact is recognized in Scripture. God chose not Abraham alone, but Abraham and his posterity. The priesthood was confined to the family of Levi. The tribe of Judah was the royal tribe. But these were outward and social, not personal, distinctions;—meaning by personal, belonging to the individual inward being. The fact that Eli's sons were priests increased, rather than lessened, their degradation. The fact that Judah was the royal tribe did not save individual members of the tribe from the punishment of sin. The folly of family pride begins when this idea of social is confounded with that of personal superiority; when one man looks down upon another, and places himself above him in his own secret estimation, because his acquaintance, though equally well educated, and well bred, cannot reckon back the same number of noble or gentle ancestors.

Now in this, as in every other case, we shall fail if we endeavour to cure a fault by a falsehood. We can never make the child of a nobleman humble, by denying that there is any social superiority attached to nobility, because the moment intercourse with the world begins, our lessons will be practically confuted.

What is required is, that this social distinction should be valued for what it is worth, and no more. As regards this world, it is worth a great deal, for there are many privileges attached to it. It ensures the possessor outward respect, it gains him admittance to palaces, and to the houses of the wealthy and luxurious. It will secure for him deference on public occasions. He will walk first in processions; his society will be courted, and in difficult circumstances his claims will probably be first attended to. In some instances he will probably be more mercifully judged than his less distinguished fellow-creatures. As it will be supposed that he has greater temptations, so, if he should give way to them, there will be more excuses made for him, and if he should escape them he will be more admired and respected. These are pleasant things, and by no means unimportant, therefore let them be acknowledged. And even if there should be no nobility, yet the fact of belonging to a family which has for years held an honourable position will procure nearly the same privileges. When men and women meet in the world they cannot all go first; and so far as it is a satisfaction to be amongst the number of those who are put foremost and treated with deference, so far it is an advantage to belong to an old family.

And doubtless also there is something better than this in inherited dignity. It is the type of that only true dignity which is ours as the children of God; and when social superiority is acknowledged, as bringing with it a special moral responsibility, it can

do us no harm to recognize it. For then we shall try our fellow-creatures by the same standard as we try ourselves, and family pride will disappear, whilst family respect will remain. God's standard will be ours. What He reckons of importance will be of importance to us; and every worldly honour tested by the touchstone of that which must be its end—even Death—will dwindle to its true proportion.

All this cannot be taught to children by words. We may exhort, and lecture; we may exclaim with Wolsey, "Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye;" but if we do not practise what we preach, in this instance more perhaps than in any other, our words will be utterly without effect. For the education of children upon this point is carried on, for the most part, without our being aware of it. Passing observations made in their presence rest in their minds. Discussions as to whose society may be cultivated and whose may not, are listened to by them with the utmost interest. Little practical neglects or slights shown to persons not quite in the same grade are noticed. The fact that they are allowed to be intimate with people of a certain rank, though they may be neither estimable nor agreeable, whilst the society of others who have far more intrinsic worth is avoided, must excite inquiry as to the cause. And these are the things which educate. Young persons may read their Bibles regularly, they may learn texts upon humility, and be told that God "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble;" they may even have the example of their

lowly Saviour pointed out to them, and listen to eloquent exhortations upon His life; and, more than all, they may be taught to show great kindness to the poor, with whom there is no question of competition; and yet the exclusiveness which they daily see practised as regards those whose social position approximates to their own, will counteract all these lessons, and they will grow up proud, in the midst of what is supposed to be an atmosphere of humility.

The task of uprooting family pride is, it need scarcely be said, most difficult. Yet to minds bent upon serving God it cannot be impossible. The tendency to this weakness—to call it by no harsher name—is so universal, that we can scarcely err in keeping a perpetual check upon it, and constantly reminding ourselves of its folly. The trials of life must, sooner or later, give it rude though salutary shocks, but only principle can ultimately prevail against it. Perhaps negative correction is better upon the whole than positive. Instead of declaiming against pride, let attentions be shown to those who are really worthy of them, without reference to their pedigree. And let these attentions be respectful, not condescending. Show young people that nobility receives honour by intercourse with those whom God values; and never for a moment let rank be allowed to assume the privilege which is by some persons attributed to charity, and "covers a multitude of sins."

By these means we may, through God's help, at length succeed in destroying the overbearing and absurd self-estimation which is known by the name of family pride; and reduce it to that simple regard

for social differences which is necessary in order to prevent society, as it is now constituted, from becoming a confused, lawless struggle for personal precedence.

CHAPTER II.

PRIDE (*continued*).

But if the world is merciful to family pride, still more leniently does it view intellectual pride. It affects, indeed, to laugh at conceit, but no one who watches the course of events will fail to see that conceit does, in the end, gain the day. The price which a man puts upon himself is in general that which the world, at least in his own generation, puts upon him. Not, indeed, meaning by the world the thinking, sensible portion of the community, but the world in its large sense, including that vast majority who know not what they admire, or why they admire, but applaud simply because others do so.

And even those who profess to be, and really are, thoughtful and reasonable, will often defend the pride of talent, as if it was a very pardonable fault, scarcely, indeed, to be called one, because talent is in itself something worthy of admiration.

No doubt genius and talent, of whatever kind, are gifts from God, the highest which He bestows, independent of that gift of His Holy Spirit, the fruits of which constitute moral and religious worth. But they can in no sense be called our own, for they are bestowed without reference to our will. They

are, in fact, treasures lent for a special purpose, in like manner as wealth, or beauty, or social position, or any other advantage. And will has no power over them, except in regard to their exercise. No man can will himself to be a wonderful composer, or a great poet. Genius cannot increase itself; and for those who have only talent, they can but labour with such earnestness to improve the power originally bestowed, that it may be cultivated to its highest extent. This question of will forms an essential distinction between intellectual and moral gifts. God has, in His great mercy, vouchsafed to establish a connection between the human will and the gift of His grace. The more we will or desire to obtain that grace, the more it will be granted us; and it is this effort of will in the acquirement and practical use of grace which He vouchsafes to call goodness, and promises to reward. And so far as we will or desire to use God's gifts of intellect for His glory, and patiently labour to cultivate and improve them, so far they have in them a moral worth. But this use of intellect is quite independent of its amount. The dull child, who conscientiously plods over her lesson, and needs an hour to acquire it perfectly, exercises a much greater amount of will than the clever child, who reads it over twice, and then repeats it without a fault; and she is therefore the more worthy of respect.

But the world will not see or own this; neither, in the generality of cases, will the child herself. Mental gifts are at first sight so entirely one with the individual to whom they are entrusted, that it requires a real effort of mind to view them apart. And when

the world makes an idol of talent, it can scarcely be a matter of marvel that the fortunate owner of the treasure should lend himself to the almost universal delusion, and in the end prostrate himself before what he conceives to be his own image, and become a self-worshipper.

Here, again, truth is the only safeguard. God forbid that we should despise or depreciate intellect or talent! That which comes direct from God must be in itself most precious. Infinitely small as the powers of the highest human intellect must be when compared with the Wisdom of Omniscience, still they are in their nature the same; and we must, we cannot but reverence them.

The sin of intellectual pride does not consist in admiration of intellect; and the folly of conceit is not to be found in the acknowledgment and appreciation of powers which have really been bestowed. It is when intellect is looked upon in the same light as moral goodness, and the extent and importance of talent are over-estimated, that sin and folly creep in.

The worship of intellect is one of the great sins of the present day. We see it in the reverence openly expressed for genius and talent, whatever may be the use to which they are applied. Scarcely any one hesitates to say—"Such a person is delightful: rather good for nothing, possibly unprincipled; but then so clever—he must be forgiven." Hearing such observations sometimes carries the mind onward beyond this little world, with its infinitesimally small amount of knowledge, its far-off approach to truth and wisdom, or even to that which seems peculiarly earthly —wit—the perception of incongruous analogies,—

and as there is something very overwhelming in the endeavour to grasp, even for one instant, the distance between the earth and the nearest fixed star; so thought, when it looks beyond this world, finds it yet more overwhelming to contemplate the distance between Newton, Shakespeare, or Bacon, and—Omniscience. And if we regard any inferior intellect, it is so diminished by the juxtaposition as to require a mental microscope to discover it.

And then to hear people talk of this wonderful human intellect, this astonishing talent, these marvelous powers—it really verges upon the ludicrous! They are no doubt marvellous, just as a child's powers of motion are marvellous—but the marvel is in kind, not in degree. That we should be able to think at all, to grasp abstract truth, to comprehend scientific principles, is most wonderful; but the degrees of these powers, the amount which one man possesses more than another, require calculations so minute that they can only be of importance on this side the grave.

Pass it—and Sir Isaac Newton and the little infant who drew but one breath, and then died, must equally stand amazed and confounded before the Omniscience of God.

Worship of intellect as intellect, is, in fact, an earthly delusion. It cannot stand the test of truth, and therefore, if we desire to check it, we have simply to bring it to that test, by asking not what clever and scientific and so-called wise men can know or do, but what they cannot. The little infant thinks itself wonderful, because it can crawl across the room on its hands and knees. Place it at the foot of

Mont Blanc, and then bid it ascend to the summit, and where will be its self-admiration?

These considerations may be further enforced by a fact, which at once places moral power on a higher elevation than mental, even regarding them both intellectually.

Each is alike a gift from God, each is an emanation from His perfection.

But moral powers, in so far as they are perfect, are so absolutely; whilst mental powers can never be anything but indefinitely comparative.

A child who speaks truth, does that which—let it be said with all reverence—cannot, in so far as it is simple truth, be surpassed even by God himself. But the astronomer who calculates the distances of the fixed stars has not approached within the faintest calculable nearness to God's knowledge. Angels in their perfect innocence bear an absolute resemblance to their Maker,—but when we inquire as to their wisdom, we are told that God "charges them with folly."

These truths must be seen by ourselves before we can hope to inculcate them upon our children. The generality of persons overlook them, and probably will continue to do so. For the worship of intellect is far too subtle a snare of the tempter ever to be allowed to fall into neglect. No effective rules or hints can be given as regards saving children from the delusion, if we are possessed of it ourselves, for we shall transmit it to them unconsciously. And it will work in their lives, and bring its fatal results of wilfulness, false principles, too often of grievous sins; but we shall never trace them to their source, because we have

never discovered it in ourselves. If, on the other hand, we have been happily saved from it, or are striving against it, we shall view it in its true light, and our first effort will be to show it truly to our children. A few strong words may stamp the lesson upon them for life. For there is that in the heart of the young, which cannot fail to respond to us. They know,—we all know,—that God does not value any human being for his intellectual powers. They know, —we all know,—that these powers will at the last day rise up to our condemnation if they have not been used for God's service. Both reason and conscience whisper that the gates of Heaven may hereafter be opened to the unlettered but humble peasant; and barred against the world-renowned philosopher, who seeks admittance in his pride; and thinking of these things, and remembering those most awful words, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," [1] it may be that the children, thus early warned, will escape the snare of intellect-worship, and make it their primary object not to be celebrated authors or scientific discoverers, "but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God." [2]

Place God first, and talent falls into its right place, and harmony and beauty are the result.

Place intellect first, and, hard though it may seem to say, we do but yield to the temptation through which angels fell, and by which, if we give way to it, we must one day fall with them.

But the worship of intellect is, for the most part,

[1] St. Luke xii. 48. [2] Micah vi. 8.

the sin of those who possess intellect. There is another form of intellectual pride less subtle, but even more common—conceit; a false estimate both of the powers which have been bestowed, and of their value in the sight of the world. The discipline of life is often very efficacious in knocking this folly on the head. Children brought up at home under the eyes of admiring parents and friends are very frequently conceited. Mothers often talk to their children seriously about not thinking much of themselves, whilst they exhibit their drawings to visitors, extol their quickness in language, and repeat the praises which are bestowed upon them by their masters; never perceiving that by so doing they are building up with one hand what they are pulling down with the other. It is quite sad, indeed, to see how constantly even very little children are literally educated in conceit by the absurd folly of repeating what are considered their clever sayings and doings before them. Conceit is one of the faults for which, as it has been said in a former chapter, a severe treatment is necessary. A girl who thinks herself well informed may without any circumlocution be told that she is ignorant; or one who considers herself accomplished may be warned that she is but a mere beginner; and if in consequence she should be out of temper no harm will result. The object is to lessen her self-estimation, and when this is done she will cease to be angry with those who made her see the truth. This method of cure is, however, by no means infallible. Conceit, when ingrained, is blind, and the operation of mental couching is as doubtful as that of physical. The imagination luxuriates in a world of its own;

quite different from the true world, and peopled with images of self under different guises. This is evident from the absurd exhibitions of conceit, made by persons otherwise sensible and well judging. The varied forms of this fault can, indeed, scarcely fail at times to provoke a smile in any one who looks upon society without taking part in it, so as to be excited or particularly interested by it. The conversation at a dinner table will often show the singularly exaggerated view which particular individuals take of their own peculiar gifts. A person possessed of some special power, whether intellectual or only mechanical, will sometimes engross the conversation as if there was nothing else worth attending to but that which he himself understands. A clever lawyer talks as if the whole world had but one interest, that of getting up cases and settling legal difficulties. A connoisseur in art lays down the law about painting and sculpture. A musician can talk of nothing but the comparative merits of different composers. It is not merely that such persons are drawn out, and led to converse upon the subject of which they know most, but that they can converse upon nothing else. The particular profession, accomplishment, or study, to which they have devoted themselves, and for which they have a special aptitude, is the one thing for the furtherance of which, if one might judge from their conversation, it is to be supposed that the world was created.

Conceit, when thus rooted in a person of mature years, is perhaps scarcely ever eradicated; partly because its indulgence has become a habit, and partly also, and more especially, because, as people advance

in life, no one, or scarcely any one, has the courage to tell them of their faults and follies. The more important, therefore, it becomes to check them in youth.

There is a chapter in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, which, if applied to earthly as well as spiritual gifts, will be found to contain the essence of all the advice that can be given on the subject. The Apostle speaks of the diversities of God's gifts, and the importance of each separately with reference to the good of all. He takes the analogy of the body, and asks, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" He bids us remember that "those members of the body, which seem to be feeble, are necessary;" and that "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." [1]

If these truths could be borne in mind by us all, where would be the place for conceit?

Granted that we are what the world is pleased to call clever, accomplished, scientific, or whatever the gift may be, it is an advantage to be valued truly only by being weighed in the balance with others. It could not even exist without them. Very rare, indeed, is it to find any person who has great intellectual gifts in anything like equal proportions. The first-rate mathematician is frequently an illogical reasoner. The sound reasoner perhaps finds it difficult to master the first problem in Euclid.

It is the same in everything. We have all gifts of some kind. If we have not brains in our head,

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 17, 22, 24.

they are generally found in our fingers; and without the fingers the head would be very badly off. The balance and comparison of these different advantages, as it will tend to inspirit and cheer those who are intellectually dull, will be a most wholesome check upon those who are the reverse.

View a talent relatively, and it may still be estimated highly, as all God's gifts should be, but conceit will be impossible. The most richly endowed mind of the present age, or of any age, is only partially so: others also have gifts, and they have also a claim to respect and consideration.

This is a lesson for the schoolroom—for home life; it must be learnt by means of constant repetition; perpetual reference to the advantages bestowed upon the different members of the same family or household. And should the tendency to conceit exhibit itself in a false estimate of the actual amount, rather than in the comparative value of the intellectual or artistic powers, comparison may still be efficaciously employed to counteract it. Never let clever children compare themselves with their companions, but always place before them the highest possible standard. B. may do better than A., and C. may do better than B. The comparison is easily made, but it may be in a manner neutralized by a plain statement of facts, which puts C. by the side of Z., and calculates the distance between them. But even the perception of relative inferiority will not always destroy conceit. In one of Miss Edgeworth's clever stories, she gives an illustration of low social ambition, by saying that the question lay between being the "first in Cranbourne Alley, or the last in Weymouth Street." In

the case to which she referred, Weymouth Street was chosen; but nine-tenths of the conceit which we meet with in the world has no desire to rise above Cranbourne Alley. And so far it is a wise desire, that it is easily gratified. To be first in the school-room—then in the home circle—then in the small coterie; to be admired by inferiors, wondered at by those who are no judges, and to take all this wonder and admiration into our hearts—to cherish it, look at it, dwell upon it, till we forget that there is any other praise worth having—is a pleasure within reach of any person who has even the smallest amount of what is considered talent. And it can be purchased at a sacrifice very slight in the eyes of the world. We have but to reject truth, and consent to receive tribute in falsehood. And the world for the most part lives upon falsehood; and if there were no Death, no Grave, and no Judgment to come, it might continue to do so comfortably enough.

It is only unfortunate that conceit, like everything else belonging to this world, must sooner or later have an end; and that when we awake in another state of existence, our condition for Eternity will be determined not by the praise of men based upon falsehood, but upon the Judgment of God, which has its foundation in truth.

Conceit, then, in all cases, is but miserable weakness and blind folly. Conceit in women—which is almost always intellectual conceit—is, perhaps, the highest degree of folly, because it has the least ground for its pretensions. This is not the place for entering upon the vexed and really absurd question as to the relative mental powers of men and women.

Abstract theories may be strong, but facts are stronger. Possibly, women may be capable of doing all that men do; but practically they do not do it. The cause may be physical, social, or educational—it matters not. Since time began it has been found that men have been poets, sculptors, painters, metaphysicians, and natural philosophers, in the first degree, and women in the second. So long as we continue intellect worshippers this consideration will be very humiliating to women's conceit. Whether it will be of much importance when we stand before the Throne of God is quite another question.

But it is a fact to be remembered, more especially in these days, when women are taking so prominent a part in literature; and in social, scientific, and even political discussions. There are no doubt subjects which women will treat better than men, because they know more about them. A woman understands her own sex more thoroughly than a man does. She knows what will suit them, touch them, help them. She understands more truly the needs of children—she can enter more fully into questions of domestic economy and household management. But women who aspire to equality with men are not content with this superiority in their own particular sphere. They seek to meet men upon some common ground, open to both; and here it is that they become the victims of an absurd delusion. They are able, no doubt, to attain a certain pre-eminence; that is to say, a very clever woman may, without difficulty, rival an ordinarily clever man. But she forgets that the clever man has others greatly superior above him. First-rate women

must be placed side by side with first-rate men, if we wish to form a true estimate of the relative attainments of the two sexes. But for the most part this is not what women desire, because it brings before them the unpleasing fact that in the pre-eminence which has been accorded them, they have been treated as the skilful chess-player treats his aspiring but inferior antagonist. The game may be won by the latter, but before it began both queen and castle were put aside.

A great deal of the conceit and the paltry ambition which turns the heads of clever young girls, might probably be crushed in the bud, if this true distinction between the literary and scientific fame of men and women were borne in mind. After all, it is nothing so very great to be the first in Cranbourne Alley. Unless there is some outward call, some necessity about which there can be no mistake, it may be better to content oneself with being the last in Weymouth Street; with being a listener and a learner at the feet of our superiors, rather than the oracle and teacher of those whom we know to be our inferiors. A true estimate of women's talents would probably show that the larger portion exists amongst the persons whose names are unknown; who have had the good sense to see that they could do their duty as efficiently to others, and more safely for themselves, as workers, than as teachers. But there is nothing like a practical lesson on this subject. Conceit, and thirst for fame and notoriety, are follies which will never be thoroughly checked by direct advice. A little practical satire is the only sure cure; and we shall not crush talent by it, because, if

a young girl really has a power, which she ought to use, it will display itself, in spite of the satire. And the consciousness need not then be dreaded. The one object to be aimed at is truth, and we need never fear to view gifts truly, or to own that they exist, for unless this is done, they cannot be turned to good account.

But it will be asked, what is meant by practical satire? and the answer is—a practical exemplification of ignorance and carelessness. For instance, young girls who have any imagination, delight in exercising it by writing. They string incidents together, and call them stories, and revel in the power of summoning up the creatures of their fancy, and making them walk, and talk, as if they were living beings. And so real are they to them, that they have no perception that they are not equally real to others. They look at them, as the child does at the half-dozen strokes forming a dim outline of a creature with long ears, four legs, and a tail, which it immediately pronounces to be a donkey, and forthwith proceeds to invest with all a donkey's attractions.

Now, as it would be useless to try and persuade the child that the rough caricature was not an image of the real animal, because its imagination provides for all deficiencies; so it is equally useless to try and persuade these incipient novel writers that the creations of their brain are merely vague and distorted outlines. To them they are full of life. And so also with regard to the power of writing. To say to them that they know nothing about it is simply to contradict what appears to be the evidence of their senses. They can understand their own

sentences, and they cannot believe that any difficulty exists with others. Only one thing will bring them to a conviction of the truth. If they must write, let them do it, but give them an abstract of history as an exercise; make them condense facts, and seize upon those which are really important. Insist upon the necessity of agreement between nominative cases and verbs, between relatives and their antecedents; show them how easily, by the misplacement of a word, the meaning of a sentence may be left open to misconstruction. Such a practical exemplification of their incapacity will tell upon them in the end more than any direct criticism. And it will have the advantage of being silent, and not exciting resentment. The lesson will be taken to heart quietly, and acted upon. If there is any real talent, the practice of careful composition will be most useful; and if there is not, there will be a self-conviction which will ultimately crush the foolish conceit and ambition.

And now, at the close of this inquiry as to the nature and the various exhibitions of pride, we come back to the conclusion that truth is the foundation stone of humility, the guardian of self-respect. It may be well to enforce what reason teaches by an illustration drawn from Scripture, and in no instance is it so clearly set forth, as in the character of the Apostle whom, more than all others, it has pleased God to bring before us in his social life, in the trials which accompanied it, and in the inward struggles which were their necessary result.

Perhaps there are few who, when reading St. Paul's

defence of himself, both in his public speeches and in his writings, have not, at times, been inclined to pause, and ask, is all this self-appreciation consistent with the humility of a Christian?

"Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."[1] "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."[2] "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all."[3]

These are the Apostle's bold public declarations of his moral, religious, and political innocence.

And still more strongly in writing to the Corinthians he says, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;"[4] and, again, we "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."[5]

And when the question is raised as to the extent of his authority compared with that of others, St. Paul places himself at once on a par "with the very chiefest apostles." He enumerates his labours and sufferings for Christ's sake with a minuteness, which seems to awaken a sense of unfitness even

[1] Acts xxiii. 1. [2] Acts xxiv. 16. [3] Acts xxv. 8.
[4] 2 Cor. i. 12. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 2.

in his own mind; and at length goaded, as it were, by the consciousness of unjust depreciation, to reveal an honour which, up to this time, had been secret between himself and his God; he concludes by relating in words which, if possible, he would fain save from personal application, his mysterious assumption into the third Heaven, and the hearing of those "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."[1]

And why? What could induce one who was avowedly a most earnest, if not *the* most earnest disciple of the lowly Redeemer of the world, to make this boast of his authority, of his work, and its reward?

Simply the necessity of truth.

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."[2]

Those last words speak the real mind of St. Paul. Yes, he could bear to look all fully in the face;—his natural powers, his supernatural gifts, his position in the Church, his energy and endurance, his self-denial and courage. He shrank from the acknowledgment of none of these things.

For he stood before the world as the child of a peasant might stand when elected to a throne; dressed in the robes of royalty, and receiving the homage due to the position in which he had been placed; but never for one moment forgetting that

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 4.

[2] 2 Cor. xii. 11.

in himself,—his birth, his power, his qualifications, his own strength and ability, he was—what he had always been—nothing.

Let us love truth as St. Paul loved it, and we also shall look without shrinking at our virtues, our talents, or our social pre-eminence, because, like him, we shall own that glorying is folly.

CHAPTER III.

VANITY.

SELFISHNESS and pride are undoubtedly the two faults to counteract which truth may be most effectively employed. It is sometimes supposed that vanity may be reached by the same means; but this idea seems to have arisen from the common mistake of confusing it with conceit. Vanity is an inordinate love of admiration, conceit is inordinate self-esteem.

Conceit may be, and often is, accompanied by vanity, but there is no necessary connection between them. A person may have an overweening estimate of his own powers, and yet, from the very fact, be rendered comparatively indifferent to what is said of him. Whilst, on the contrary, a vain person may be quite aware that his talents are small, and yet be continually looking out for, and thirsting for praise.

And because vanity is not so open to correction by truth as pride is, therefore, as it would seem, it is more difficult to eradicate it. We often hear it said "intercourse with others will knock the conceit out of such a person," and the remark describes a very wholesome discipline, which, probably, we

have all, more or less, undergone at some period of our lives. But vanity was never yet *knocked* out of any one. It has a clinging, creeping nature, which defies rough blows; and its vitality is marvellous. Cut it down in one form, and it will spring up in another; attempt to destroy it by destroying the conceit on which it fed, and it will give up conceit, and take the garb of humility. If it cannot attract attention by displaying virtues, it will by confessing faults; the one thing it cannot endure is to be unnoticed.

Now, any one who thinks at all upon the subject will see at once that the endeavour to uproot a fault like this by any external process is simply hopeless. The more we work at it, the more it will grow. And the attempt is made even more difficult by the fact that the germ of vanity, love of approbation, is innocent and involuntary. Not to feel pleasure in approbation, supposing it to be deserved, is impossible. Of course, when there is a consciousness that if the true facts were known, it would be seen to be unmerited, a very true mind will regret it, and feel pain at receiving it. But, in ordinary cases, as, for instance, when praise is bestowed by a parent upon a child who has been diligent or obedient, the pleasure is not only permissible, but if it were not felt, the character would be imperfect. Here, however, we must distinguish between approbation and admiration. To be approved implies that we have set some standard before us, and have in a measure succeeded in attaining it; the praise which is accorded us is therefore based upon moral grounds, and is not absolute, but comparative. A parent approves a child for being at-

tentive at her lessons, but it does not follow that the child is a marvel of genius. And approval also implies that the person who approves is in a condition to form a judgment; the approbation of one who is really ignorant or prejudiced cannot really be a gratification.

So far, then, love of approbation is consistent with thoroughly earnest and religious principle. But we may go yet further, and acknowledge that even when this love of approbation takes, as it so continually does, the form of love of admiration, or the praise which is given to any gift or quality for its own sake, apart from the attempt to reach a higher standard of perfection; yet in its first motions it is innocent, because it is involuntary, and it is only the consent of the will which makes any feeling sinful or the reverse. A person who possesses some gift of beauty or talent cannot, as a general rule, avoid feeling pleasure in words of admiration.

But here the innocent love of admiration stops, and vanity steps in. For vanity is a reflex act of the mind. It takes the pleasure excited by the consciousness of admiration, and endeavours to retain it by thinking of and dwelling upon the praise received. This excites a morbid, exaggerated desire for a renewal of the admiration, and various methods are in consequence resorted to, in order to attain it. Again, the enjoyment is prolonged, and increased by reflection, and a fresh stimulus is given to the thirst for it; and so vanity becomes a habit of mind.

Now, there are a few general rules to be given as regards this fault, most difficult to put in practice,

but the least relaxation of which will probably be fatal to improvement.

We cannot hope merely to check vanity, we must actually uproot it. It must be dealt with in the same way as those noxious spreading weeds which we tear out of the ground, not venturing to leave a fibre behind, lest the plant should grow again.

Very few there are probably who will accept this teaching. It demands an effort which can only be made in God's strength, and with a full sincerity of will. And with the majority will is weak. Better it seems to fight with a foe feebly, for years, sometimes victorious, oftener subdued, but trusting in the end to be conquerors, than by one vigorous—surely we may call it superhuman—effort, to grapple with and destroy him at once. Vanity is a great fault, we think, but there is so much in it that is involuntary, we can scarcely call it a sin. We see it in such really good people;—people who are charitable, and self-denying, and deeply devotional,—so much better in many ways than others who do not appear vain.

Granted—all except the assertion that it is not a sin. It is a sin, for it loves the praise of men rather than the praise of God; and because of this love in its most exaggerated form, the Pharisees, we are told, rejected our Lord. And no one, probably, who has earnestly set himself to the task of self-improvement, and is conscious of being naturally vain, will hesitate to confess that it is the fault which, from its extreme insidiousness, has given him more trouble than any other; that it has marred his best inclinations, and destroyed the happiness of his holiest moments; that

it has, in fact, pursued him like a deadly enemy through life, appearing under the most unlooked-for circumstances, and concealing itself under forms in which nothing but a most strict examination could detect it.

And if this is the confession of those who struggle earnestly, what must be the history of those who fight feebly; who have allowed vanity to grow, and spread, till it has actually covered the whole surface of the character, and eaten into it—corroded it, till there is not a single good feeling untainted by it?

The truth is that we cannot be too severe, either with ourselves or with others, when we are dealing with vanity; or, in other words, the pleasure derived from the reflex act of the mind upon admiration which has been offered us. The few definite rules already referred to will, therefore, it may be hoped, assist young people in their struggle with it, even though they may be inclined to call them, at first sight, hopelessly strict.

We may advise them, in the first place, never to ask what any person thinks of them, or has said about them.

Secondly. If they are told—never to repeat the same to their companions, whether the remarks imply praise or blame.

Thirdly. Never, if they can avoid it, to look at any letter or writing in which they know that admiration has been expressed of anything they have said or done.

Fourthly. When they have been admired for anything which they have said or done, or for their personal appearance, never to repeat such admiration

to themselves over again. The very instant the memory of it recurs it should be checked, even as a profane or impure thought. This will be the greatest difficulty of all at first, and yet, in the end, it will become easy, from the working of that law of association which is the basis of what we call habit. When the thought of admiration is recognized as a temptation, conscience will give the warning, and at last, almost without effort, it will, from habit, be instantly crushed.

Exceptions to these rules may, perhaps, be thought necessary as regards the praise of parents and persons set in authority. But, in fact, such praise is of a different character from that of which we have been speaking. It is *approbation*, not *admiration;* and pleasure derived from approbation, or the consciousness that we have tried to do right or well, and that our efforts are acknowledged, is quite permissible. God vouchsafes to approve us, but He can never admire us. When, however, home approval takes the form of admiration, as it not unfrequently does, it is the most dangerous kind of incentive to vanity, and must be crushed as mercilessly as any other temptation.

A child may make a clever copy of a drawing and be praised for it, and may justly feel pleased at the approbation, and even think of it again with a sense of encouragement; but if she is told that she is a wonderful artist, and dwells upon the thought, she must become vain.

Closely connected with this ruminating faculty, by which we feed upon admiration for weeks or months after it has been received, is that of day-

dreams, the most common enjoyment of young people with any imagination, and perhaps the most dangerous.

Here, again, the rule seems so rigid that one is tempted to relax it. But it would be false kindness. The mischief of day-dreams is that, in some form or other, they make self the centre. It is a very singular power which we possess, that of separating ourselves, as it were, into two persons, one in imagination acting and talking, and the other actually admiring and praising; though, as will generally be the case, under some disguise which, for the moment, conceals the fact that it is only, after all, self-admiration.

We are not called upon now to enter into a metaphysical disquisition as to the mode in which these powers act, nor the purposes for which they were given us; what we are at present concerned with is, the use which is so commonly made of them for the gratification of vanity. Young people deceive themselves grievously upon this matter. They suppose that because in imagination they act nobly and virtuously, therefore their thoughts are not evil, but, on the contrary, lead to the encouragement of good. But they have only to ask themselves in what the pleasure of the indulgence in these virtuous day-dreams consists. Certainly not in the contemplation of the virtue in itself, for it is comparatively little pleasure to them to think of noble actions performed by other persons. It is the act of reflecting upon self, or in other words, the gratification of vanity, which is so agreeable. And this falsity, this reflecting upon actions which have no existence, except in

imagination, will bear the necessary and fatal fruit of all falsity. It will, unless checked, in the end make the whole inward character false, though the outward actions may, for the time, and perhaps always, in some degree, continue true. A person inwardly devoured by vanity may never be so degraded as to tell actual falsehoods, but the self-deceit which vanity engenders will inevitably lead to many things approaching to it.

And for these reasons—the consideration of the present evil, and future results of day-dreams—the only advice which can safely be given to young persons, or, indeed, to any person, is to crush them.

It may be well, however, to add, that there is a safe, legitimate use of imagination, with which self has nothing to do. We see it in the works of literature and art, and in the enjoyment which such works give, even to those who cannot produce them themselves. There is no evil, or comparatively none, in dwelling with delight upon the scenes and characters of fiction, so long as they are worthy of admiration. The danger in that case is lest we mistake virtuous emotions for virtuous actions; and because we can sympathize with what is good, may be led to suppose that we are good ourselves. But it is not till we become the heroes and heroines of our own novels that vanity enters, and imagination leads to sin.

Again, it may be owned that the rules which have been laid down upon the subject of vanity are very rigid; but they have one great advantage—they are plain; they can be understood and grasped. Young people work at their own minds, and examine, and

analyze, and perplex themselves, and cannot, after all, make out what is right or what is wrong, where good ends and evil begins; whereas, if they can only be told to *do* something—act, or not act—speak, or not speak—exercise self-discipline in some form over which they have a distinct control, they will eventually find that the mind has, if one may so speak, come right of itself. In all cases it is the will which is in fault. The will put into action, either physical or mental, gains strength, and as the will is rectified all the different complex qualities which make up human nature fall into right order and proportion.

Connected with this subject of vanity is the question as to the legitimate use of emulation. St. Paul appears to consider it permissible when he says, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain."[1] But, on the other hand, the Heavenly rewards to which he points are many, and within reach of all. The truth seems to be that emulation, when it desires to obtain the highest prize, is justifiable; when it desires to surpass others, is not so. If, therefore, we have recourse to the stimulus, we must say, not "the one or two who stand first in the list shall be rewarded because they are first;" but "every one who attains a certain standard shall have a certain reward." This will direct ambition solely to the attainment of the prize, and the question of surpassing others will become unimportant.

But vanity, especially with girls, is most frequently personal. Yet young people must be taught to dress well, or they become disagreeable to their friends,

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 24.

and if they are pretty they will naturally expect admiration. This creates a difficulty. Some very excellent moralists, perplexed upon this point, seek to cut the Gordian knot by forbidding the use of a looking-glass, so that beauty may not be able to see itself. Others institute a species of crusade against dress, and object to everything bright in colour, or fashionable in make. The greater number, however, content themselves with lectures and warnings, and finding these for the most part useless, quietly give up the attempt to stem the evil, and say "all girls are vain of beauty and have a taste for dress, and one can but hope that some day or other they will see the folly of it." But here again we must go back to the first principle of all things—truth.

If beauty really is beautiful, if God has made it a thing to be delighted in, and if the loveliness of a woman is, as almost all persons allow, the most attractive object upon which the eye can rest, then to attempt to deny or conceal that beauty is worthy of admiration, is, simply, to contradict nature.

And so, also, with regard to dress. The appreciation of it, as something important, is an instinct, and is recognized even in Scripture. The dress of the Jewish High Priest, and of the Priests generally, was, indeed, a subject for minute legislation; whilst under the Christian dispensation our Blessed Lord, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, mentions the "best robe" as the especial outward mark of a parent's forgiveness and restored love. No one, therefore, can presume to say that dress is a matter of no consequence—to be attended to or neglected at will.

Beauty is, then, to be admired, and dress is of consequence. Having arrived at these conclusions, we may safely proceed further, and say that it is as wrong to attempt to bring up children upon a falsity on this subject, as it is upon any other. If a child is to learn to be useful, she must learn to dress herself; if she is to do this properly, she must look in a glass; and if she looks in a glass, she must see herself as she is. Therefore to endeavour to deceive her upon this point is silly.

But there is a vast distinction between the consciousness that we possess a gift, and the value which we put upon it. And it is here that, probably with truth, it may be said that nine-tenths of the well intentioned mothers, or aunts, or friends, who have the care of children in their infancy, practically educate them in vanity.

When a woman marries—supposing her heart to be really in her home with her husband and children—the vanity which she originally possessed, be it great or small, very frequently leaves the obnoxious form of a desire for personal admiration, and takes that of delight in seeing her children admired. Such a feeling can scarcely be called vanity. There is so little of self in it that it often becomes most touching and winning; but it is not, therefore, safe if indulged without caution. A mother with a lovely child longs, very naturally, to have its picture. The picture is brought home, and instead of being kept for the mother's eye, or for those of her friends, it is shown to the little original as its likeness. No one supposes that the tiny creature who can scarcely speak plain has any perception of beauty, or can tell

the meaning of the word pretty. But it is a great mistake; the child has eyes, and is subject to the laws of association just as much as its mother. It has already learnt that "pretty dog," and "pretty cat," are creatures to be petted, and made much of; and so when it hears a picture called pretty, and is told that it is itself, it of course learns that the self is, in like manner, to be admired and delighted in for its beauty.

This is the first lesson in vanity. The child sees that its parents think a great deal of beauty, and of course she learns to estimate it herself in the same degree.

But it may be said: even if parents are sensible upon these points, friends and acquaintances are not.

How is it possible to guard against the foolish, incautious admiration which every child is exposed to, and which is frequently exaggerated, simply to please the parents?

It is not possible to guard against it. We may as well acknowledge that fact at once. Children will hear beauty talked about, and so learn its importance, and if they possess it themselves they will receive thoughtless admiration. But it is the home flattery which does the mischief. Home is a child's world, and if beauty is not considered a matter of great consequence there, the danger of the world's admiration will be materially lessened.

If we wish children not to think about beauty, our best plan is not to think about it ourselves; or if we do think, not to talk; or if we must talk, to speak truth. To tell a pretty child that she is plain,

though we may do so with the best intentions, is to sin by speaking falsely, and to prepare the way for an exaggerated satisfaction when the real state of the case is discovered. A little girl, in her simplicity, asks: "Mamma, am I pretty? Mrs. So-and-So says that I am." And the answer may be: "Yes, my dear; I think that you are rather nice looking." And there the conversation may be dropped; and this quiet indifference will check the rising vanity far more than a lecture upon the folly of valuing beauty, which will probably only have the effect of impressing upon the mind that a fact which requires so many cautionary words must be of considerable consequence.

The language of Scripture seems in a measure to confirm this advice. We are frequently told of beauty. Sarah, we know, was "very fair;" so also were Rebekah, and Rachel, and the daughters of Job: and throughout the Bible beauty is always mentioned as an advantage, as something to be valued; but it is never dwelt upon. It takes its place as a passing good, and then the attention is directed to something else. And this is really the place which it holds in the world. For a time it has great power, but only for a time. In a vast number of cases its influence is neutralized by the want of other charms; and even if combined with talent and goodness, it must soon fade. Young people will not see or understand this, but if they find that it is the opinion of the persons to whom they look up, they will insensibly adopt the same view of it.

The love of dress is another of those follies which children are for the most part systematically educated

in from childhood, and for which it is considered a duty to censure them in youth. So long as parents spend large sums in dressing up their little ones in handsome ribbons, and elaborate embroidery, and send them down to the drawing-room to be admired by visitors, who tell them to show their pretty sashes and bright shoes—so long children will like dress, and think a great deal about it. It is really not their fault, it is simply a case of cause and effect, sowing and reaping. People attach such an overweening value to words, and such a very insufficient value to acts. A right principled mother would on no account bring up her daughter to think much of dress, but she is proud of her, and wishes her to equal others in appearance; so, without saying anything direct upon the subject, she, perhaps, makes a great point of procuring some pretty, or possibly handsome, dress for her, the colour and texture of which are talked of *con amore*. The interview with the dressmaker is one of the great events of the week; the question as to the trimming is a topic of conversation for days; the dress, when finished, is tried on, and the young lady is turned and twisted about, perhaps for an hour, till even her vanity can scarcely bear the ordeal. Then she is told that the dress looks very well, that it is very becoming, and, as a reward for her patience, she is permitted to take one look at herself in the glass; and bears away with her the impression of a very elegant, fashionable looking creature, who will form an enchanting heroine for her next day-dream.

This ceremony is repeated, though with much greater attention, and consequent excitement, when

the dress is actually to be exhibited in public; but when at length the adjusting and improving are at an end, and the daughter is allowed to depart, the mother wakes up to the perception of a certain air of self-consciousness and stiffness, if not of actual affectation; and conscience whispering something about vanity and its danger, she exclaims: "Now, my dear, you have looked at yourself enough! The dress does very well; go away, and don't think about yourself. After all, you know it is of much more consequence how you behave than how you look!" Or, as Mrs. Primrose admirably condensed the maternal warning, "Handsome is that handsome does. Hold up your heads, my dears!"

But the home lesson of vanity is not over. The party takes place, and the next day forms a topic of conversation. Still dress is the most engrossing subject. The mother does not actually talk to her child about her own appearance, but she criticizes that of every one else, and of course the daughter does the same. There may be nothing ill-natured in what is said, possibly quite the reverse. Amiable, imaginative persons take pleasure in viewing their friends picturesquely; and to the young girl it is almost as pleasant as a novel to recall the bright party, and to picture to herself in detail the lovely silks, and the rich lace, and the splendid ornaments, which are all brought before her again in such minute and glowing detail.

Half the pleasure of a party, as every one knows, is in talking it over the next day. And the mother feels that she ought to enter into her daughter's pleasure, and is quite certain that she desires to see

her simple and unworldly; and she herself devotes so much time to duties of religion and charity, and gives so many warnings against vanity;—no wonder she is quite deluded by her own good intentions, and when the conversation ends is not in the least aware that she has been just as sedulously employed for the last hour in cultivating a taste for dress in her daughter, as she would have been if she had deliberately given her a lecture upon its extreme importance, and urged her to devote all her thoughts to it.

Now, if the mother had openly said at the beginning, "My dear, I like you to look well, and to be dressed like other people, and so I have bought the prettiest dress I could find, and intend to have it made fashionably," there would have been an open straightforward avowal of a natural object, which would have checked any personal excitement upon the subject. The dress might have been tried and fitted as a matter of business; worn, as a matter of course; and then laid aside, not to be thought of till the next occasion. And if the young lady had thus been taught to trouble herself but little about her own dress, she would naturally have cared but little about that of her friends. It is the unconscious comparison which is the stimulating ingredient in all these topics. Put self aside, and we shall think but very little of them.

It must be remembered, also, that attention to dress may be a duty, and inattention to it a real fault. The latter is sometimes a form of indolence, or selfishness, or love of singularity, or possibly vanity in another shape. And there are also many young people

to whom dress is a trouble and difficulty. They like to see themselves look well; but they do not, in the least, know how to attain their object. And so, perhaps, they give up the attempt, and acquiesce in slovenliness and untidiness. There is no virtue in this. To dress neatly and well—that is, in good taste—is a social duty. We have no right to offend our friends by looking ugly when, by a little trouble, we can avoid it. And in the numerous cases in which inaptitude for dress exists, it would be a real kindness on the part of mothers, and nurses, and elder sisters, to take a little trouble and give a few lessons, instead of—what is so often tried unsuccessfully—scolding and reproof. An awkward or near-sighted girl spends perhaps half-an-hour before her glass, endeavouring to make her hair look nice; but it is all in vain, and when she appears at the breakfast table she is received with stern looks, and told to go upstairs and put her hair tidy. But what is the use of the command? She cannot try more than she has tried, and her temper is irritated, and a storm ensues. A little instruction—which is quite as necessary for the hands as the head—would have shown her how it was she failed, and all the worry and temper would have been avoided. Some girls would be morally much the better for a few lessons from a hairdresser or a lady's maid. It would save them from self-consciousness, and in the end make them think far less about dress. What we know we do badly, and yet are expected to do well, must become a burden to us; and young people often dwell upon their own appearance for a whole evening, when they have a bow or a brooch awry; not in the least because they care for

the fact in itself, but merely from the uncomfortable feeling that they will be noticed.

To be particular about dress may, therefore, become a matter of self-discipline, just as much as to endeavour to think little of it. But in this, as in every case, we shall find that the true statement of a definite object is a great moral safeguard. Whether we desire young people to dress well, or in any other way to follow the customs of the world, if we only compel ourselves to state our wishes in plain words, we shall do but little harm, because we shall be forced to give our reasons for them. On the surface they certainly do not bear a very exalted appearance. Dress, for instance, essentially belongs to this life, but it is not in itself sinful. We may rightly wish a young girl to wear a handsome dress because she is invited to a party, where it will be expected of her. We may very naturally desire her to look well, because the sight is pleasant to us. But let there be no pretence about the matter—let us own our true object. If we shrink from doing so—if conscience whispers that we have really a hidden motive of social ambition, or a desire to surpass others—we shall do well to pause before we carry out our wishes. We may make a fair show, and even succeed in shutting our eyes to our own doubleness, but we may be certain that our children will be more clear-sighted, and in this way we shall unconsciously educate them in worldliness and insincerity.

This word worldliness describes a tone of mind with which vanity is intimately connected, and which, like it, is fostered in almost perfect unconsciousness.

Love of excitement, the craving for amusement, considered to be especially the fault and temptation of youth, are in many cases taught in childhood, almost, one may say, in infancy. Instead of making little children self-dependent as regards amusement, the moment they appear in the drawing-room some one is expected to amuse and play with them, and the mother, or sister, or aunt, must give up all her attention to them. Instead of being taught self-restraint and consideration, by being forced to be quiet while others are employed, they are allowed to interfere with every occupation. The exciting companionship of their elders becomes a daily necessity instead of an occasional treat; and after this early training in what is to them dissipation, parents are surprised that their children cannot be satisfied with only common pursuits, but always require some amusement to be found for them. Little do they think that one of the greatest blessings which can be conferred on any one is that of being contented with small pleasures; and that the child of the peasant, who can play happily with a piece of wood, has a possession which the little heir of thousands, surrounded by his splendid toys, might envy.

Few playthings, few companions, few story books. Upon these children may be educated simply and thoroughly. Give them many, and we create artificial necessities, which can only be satisfied by artificial means. And with these necessities there must creep in that wretched spirit of worldliness which is the hidden worm eating away all that is good and noble in a character. The child with her perpetual longing for new tales, her

listlessness when she is not actually engaged in study, her constant desire for little fineries, her craving for amusement—some one to play with, or to visit—some young party at home or abroad—is but rehearsing on a small scale what her elders enact on a large one.

She is practising discontent, learning to find duty and usefulness uninteresting, to live for pleasure, to care only for what may excite. And it is this spirit which, when carried out, ultimately becomes worldliness.

"Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."[1] We want no other definition of worldliness. It is impossible to draw true distinctions between one amusement and another; to say that a dinner-party is lawful, and a dance unlawful; for greediness and excess may as possibly be associated with the one, as vanity and folly may be with the other; and display may be shared equally by both. When we attempt to define in these ways, we are almost certain to be uncharitable and Pharisaical; but we cannot be wrong in saying, that when amusement and excitement are necessities, the spirit is worldly, and therefore when we teach children to crave them, we are educating them in worldliness.

This will not to many seem a very great danger. Worldliness is an unobtrusive fault. It is cold and repelling, indeed, when we approach it closely, but it is perhaps rather graceful and refined at a distance. And it will never offend our taste, and seldom jar upon us. We may live comfortably

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 4.

with it, so long as we do not come in its way. Cross it, and it will turn against us with a tiger's fierceness; but leave it to itself, and it will never trouble us. On the contrary, indeed, if we only keep our religious peculiarities within certain limits, it will walk by our side, and do us the honour of offering its approval.

There is but one great evil attached to it. It absorbs the mind, and entirely prevents it from forcing itself upon the things which belong to the invisible world. It cannot therefore enter Heaven. Whatever then assists in training children in worldliness, must at the same time be training them for some place which is not Heaven.

That is a grave matter. Perhaps when we are next inclined to indulge ourselves and our children by a round of excitement, whether on a small or a large scale, we may pause and think of it.

CHAPTER IV.

TEMPER.

THE faults which we have last been considering are, as it will have been evident, only partially under external guidance. We may check and discourage them; but we cannot, as in the case of disobedience, exercise any direct control over them. They can only be eradicated by religious principle.

And the same may be said of temper. The question is sometimes asked, "How is it possible to cure such a child of a passionate, or obstinate, or sullen temper?" The true answer is, "It is not possible." The child must, humanly speaking, cure itself. We may avoid the occasions which arouse the temper, and when it is aroused we may deal with it wisely; but the tendency will remain as it was before. We see this in a most disappointing way in the case of children who are very good-tempered with some persons, and very ill-tempered with others. A cross nurse makes a fractious child; an irritating manner in the governess excites irritability in the pupil; a severe reproof from a mother will awaken a spirit of sullenness in the daughter. And in the generality of these cases, it is usual to lay the blame on the individual who arouses the temper; as if the fact

that a person is good-tempered when not thwarted, is an evidence of an amiable disposition and wholesome self-restraint.

This mode of speaking greatly misleads both young and old. We should all be very much more ashamed of ill-temper than we are, if we did not "lay the flattering unction to our souls," that it is excusable to be angry when provoked. But herein lies the self-deception: to feel angry is excusable, to give way to anger is not so; and whatever may be the provocation it is a sin.

The Apostle indeed says, "Be ye angry, and sin not."[1] But it would seem that he speaks in the first place of the impulse of anger, which, as being involuntary, is not, in the strict sense of the word, sinful; and in the second place, of that indignation at wrong doing, which can in no way be called giving way to anger, because it is a feeling excited by a just cause; and when watched, as it ought to be, is never allowed to exceed the limits of truth and justice. The indulgence of anger, the yielding to wrathful emotions, without making any attempt to check them, is very different from this. It is a great sin, and a great disgrace.

We are all aware of the fact in our own hearts; even though the world in its judgment may deal gently with us.

No man gives way to passion without feeling, in his cooler moments, contempt for his own weakness; —a contempt which is indeed so unendurable, that it compels him, as it were, to cast the odium upon

[1] Ephes. iv.

another, by saying, "I was provoked. Such an one said so-and-so, or did so-and-so; it was impossible to help being angry." The amount of injustice, untruthfulness, and self-delusion, which is to be traced to this source, would probably startle us.

The very word which we use in excuse for ourselves is a falsehood. Impossible! no, it is never impossible to keep the temper in order, to subdue the rising of passion, and to speak the "soft answer which turneth away wrath."[1] The task does indeed appear impossible after years of indulgence in passion;—it is the only supposition by which we can account for the astounding fact that men of undoubted religious principle (religious, that is, to a certain extent), and keenly sensible to their position and influence amongst their fellow-men, are known as "excellent fellows—only with such very bad tempers;"—but it is no more really impossible than it is to overcome a habit of drinking.

A continued notorious bad temper necessarily implies both a weak religious principle and a weak will. The sooner we make young people understand this, and own that violent temper—with its apparent force and energy, its noise and bluster, and (that which is often accorded to it) its influence of fear—is really a disgrace to a rational being, as well as an offence to God, the greater is our hope of rousing them to the conflict needed to subdue it.

When this conflict is begun early, the victory is as easy as it is sure. For violent temper is something perfectly tangible; there can be no mistake about it.

[1] Prov. xv. 1.

We have a giant to fight with, but the very fact that he is a giant enables us to see him distinctly, and so prevents our fighting at random.

And children and young people do not generally, like their elders, deceive themselves on the subject of temper. They really are ashamed of it, and it does not give them power by arousing fear, it only makes them disagreeable. If they have anything like religious principle, and possibly even if they have not, they very earnestly desire to get rid of it.

Now, there is a verse in the Book of Proverbs, always quoted on behalf of the government of the temper, which seems to recognize this earnest wish, and to encourage it by an appeal to that remarkable principle of man's nature, which leads him to delight in battle, and which phrenologists call combativeness —"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."[1]

Ruling, in this place, cannot mean merely guiding or governing, for the act is compared with a siege and victory. Contest must therefore be included in both. And a violent temper is necessarily accompanied by a tendency to combativeness. We continually see the exaggeration of the latter ending in crime, as the frequent and natural consequence of the indulgence of the former. Here, then, we have an instinct or tendency that may ultimately become a power, which, if only seized upon at the right moment, and directed in the right way, may prove the very instrument needed to subdue a violent temper.

[1] Prov. xvi. 32.

For temper, it is to be remembered, must be controlled before religious principle can, generally speaking, be expected to act upon it. There is no doubt that the latter will do the work much more efficaciously, and far more easily; but we must not wait for it. From a child's earliest days it must be taught, that the battle with passion, the conquest of violent temper, is one of the great objects to which this love of conflict and victory is to be directed.

This is not speaking allegorically or mystically. The satisfaction arising from self-control, self-restraint, self-discipline, is just as truly a satisfaction arising from the exercise of power, as that which is derived from government of any other kind. No person, who is conscious that he is master of himself, that he can trust himself—check himself, —be, in fact, the lord of his own passions and inclinations, is insensible to it. It constitutes, in fact, to many minds, the great charm of asceticism; and though it is a feeling that may easily be carried to excess, and is only safe when united with that sincerity of heart which leads us to place ourselves by our Saviour's side, and compare our self-conquest with His endurance; yet it would seem, even from the testimony of Scripture, to be perfectly lawful.

Allowing it to be so, then we can at once make an appeal to a feeling in the human heart, to which it will scarcely fail to respond.

The giant stands before us—Passion. It must be conquered, through God's grace, and with His help, but also by the exertion of the individual will. How soon? How completely shall the victory be gained? We may give a certain time, according to circum-

stances, for the campaign. By the end of that time, passionate temper must be so overcome that even keen provocation shall not be able to arouse it beyond the moment. That is a definite object to set before a child, and with it there must be definite rules. Perhaps one only will suffice. When inwardly quivering and trembling with anger, stand perfectly still, and do not speak for the space of one minute. The rush of the whirlwind will be over then, and the consciousness of self-mastery will have invigorated the whole moral being; and even if self-restraint should subsequently be lost, there will still be the feeling of partial victory. Continue this, and soon—much sooner than we could possibly imagine—by the laws of association which form a habit, the instant the giant is aroused, the will which is to overcome him will be aroused also. Of course the real difficulty lies with the will, and here it is that religious principle acts so powerfully; but it may again be repeated, that violent temper is one of those faults which must be stopped in its *very earliest stages*, or it will so get the upper hand, that even a really earnest spirit will not entirely subdue it; and the man who is possessed by it—for in its effects, as well as in the suddenness of its attack, it often appears a species of possession —will remain an inconsistent Christian all his days.

And when this self-mastery is acquired, the impulse of temper, as well as its stormy ebullition, will be arrested, and by degrees the violent temper will really become gentle. Men are most frequently passionate because they do not give themselves time to listen or think. They misconstrue, misunderstand; they call up a phantom, and then, brandishing their

clubs, rush violently to attack it. The habit of pausing, considering, striving to be sympathetic, to hear and see as others do, is a most effectual check upon this folly: it will at length become a habit; and habit, we must remember, is as efficacious for good as it is for evil.

Most terrible as the effects of violent temper have been, and may be, yet, of all the faults to which our fallen nature is liable, there is probably not one which can be so entirely overcome, or which, in the effort to conquer it, leaves such lasting marks of good upon the character; since the force of will which it demands and cultivates, is a power to be exerted against every other fault or temptation.

All this may be said to a child as soon as it is able to understand reason; and if we add the sense of God's approbation of such efforts, and the desire to please Him, the victory is nearly certain. But for the child, we must remember—not for the man. By the time the age of fourteen is reached, if not sooner, the giant must become a slave, or it will in all likelihood be a tyrant for life.

But there are many other forms of bad temper besides that of passion; and they are so much the more difficult to deal with because they do not assume so palpable a form. Obstinacy, perverseness, irritability, fretfulness, sullenness, are really greater trials than the temptation to violent bursts of passion, for they meet us at every turn, and require continued watchfulness quite as much as an energetic will. And of these it may, perhaps, be said, that they will scarcely ever be thoroughly eradicated on this side the grave, because they belong more or less to phy-

sical temperament. Religious principle, and nothing else, will in any degree successfully attack them. What we have chiefly to guard against in education is strengthening them by want of tact, and bad management. Children, indeed, should never be allowed to call such faults by gentle names, or to make excuses for them; yet a little care may often ward off their outburst.

If a little child has a fit of obstinacy, we shall only strengthen the evil by insisting upon carrying out our will. A simpler and more efficacious mode of dealing with the case is to say: "Very well, my dear; as you don't choose to do what I tell you, I will not allow you to do it. You were told to pick up that book, and you refused; now I forbid your doing it; but instead, you shall sit upon that chair for the next quarter of an hour and look at it." Put the child upon the chair, and leave it. The obstinacy will have vanished, merely because it finds that there is no longer a law against which it can hold out.

Perverseness may be dealt with in the same way. Some children—and a great many grown-up persons—have an intuitive desire to object to whatever is proposed, and especially if it is thought that it will give them pleasure. Nothing can be more trying to those they live with, and nothing is so likely to cure them, as to take them at their word. A child is told that she is to go into the garden for some pleasant amusement, and being in a perverse mood says, in a complaining tone, that "she does not want to go." Instead of trying to persuade her that she will like it, take her at her word, and say, "Certainly, then you shall not go, as you dislike it." The next

time she will be afraid to be perverse. The same kind of spirit shows itself in raising difficulties. There are innumerable cases in life in which it is impossible to avoid a difficulty. Instead of acting upon the wise maxim, "Of two evils choose the least," perverse people, whether men, women, or children, are constantly jumping from one to the other; so that you can never grasp them and bring them to reason. If you say, "Suppose we do so and so;" the answer is, "Oh, no; that can't be, because of such or such consequences." If you then turn round, and say, "Well! then let us do so and so," you are met with, "Oh, no; that is quite impossible," because of some other consequence. And yet one of the two alternatives must be chosen. No argument will be of any avail in such a case. You may have the lever in your hand with which to move the world, but you have no fulcrum on which to rest it. A much shorter way of settling the matter is to say, "Well, then; decide for yourself, what do you think may, or ought to be done?" When driven up into a corner by this question, the folly of the perversity is seen, and the choice of difficulties is made.

These peculiarities of disposition require very careful watching and guiding, whilst children are young, for otherwise they take root insensibly, and develop most unpleasantly in after years, when perhaps they are scarcely acknowledged as faults, and therefore not struggled against. And when persons have to live and act together, especially in the case of large families, where the interests and happiness of many are affected by individual peculiarities, they become of vast importance to the comfort of daily

life, even though they may not, upon a cursory view, appear to mar the real worth of the character.

Irritability is perhaps less easily checked by efforts external to the person who gives way to it, than any of the other developments of temper of which mention has been made, for it is very often the result of physical weakness, or nervousness. We see this in the case of children in infancy, or, indeed, at any age, when an illness is coming on, or when the process of recovery has commenced; and in such instances we must be particularly careful to avoid exciting it. But when we are attempting to educate, though we must always ourselves bear the extenuating circumstances in mind, we must take care that the children, whom we are training, do not seize upon them as an excuse. This is a general rule. There may and must be exceptions. If we have ever watched by a sick bed, which must soon become the bed of death, and heard the sorrowful confession of irritability from one who is too weak to exercise self-command, and whose brain is scarcely in its natural state, so as to be able to realize the force of religious truth, we shall have found ourselves compelled to say, "Do not think irritability a sin. It is only a weakness. God will look mercifully upon it." But this is by no means the language which can rightly be used in any case except that of illness, and for this reason: irritability is not so much a disease in itself, as the symptom of some other disease—it may be physical, it may be moral. With a person in ordinary good health susceptibility of the nerves is no excuse for an irritable temper. It may make gentleness more

difficult, but it does not render its attainment impossible. The nerves are excited by some outward object; irritability, therefore, depends, for the most part, upon the view which we take of those objects.

Selfishness is one most frequent source of irritability. We think of ourselves, care for ourselves, seek our own comfort, and so are irritable with every person and every thing which interferes with self. Vanity also will render us irritable, by awakening a desire for notice, and a consequent fretfulness when it is diverted from us to others. Self-conceit—love of power—will act in the same way; and even when irritability is caused by actions and movements which offend our taste, or jar upon our peculiar mood, it can always be checked by the thought that there is no intention of annoying us; that we may be quite as much in fault in indulging these particular fancies, as the person we complain of is in giving way to the habits we dislike. Or, should we be really justified in calling them disagreeable, still there is the duty of self-control, and sympathy with infirmity. When we think of sensitiveness and susceptibility, as connected with the human frame, we shall scarcely err in believing that no mortal body could ever have been so nervously alive to all that would jar upon and pain it, as that of our Blessed Redeemer; but the idea of irritability as connected with Him, we feel at once to be blasphemous.

In dealing, therefore, with irritable children, we have first to take care that they are kept in good health; and when we are satisfied about that point, we must watch the cause which gives rise to the

irritability, and by attacking the origin of the disease, and teaching them how to attack it, we may hope, by degrees, to get rid of the symptom.

And in this case, as in that of violent temper, our best safeguard is to begin early. Irritability indulged, grows into a confirmed habit; indeed, it is one of those faults which will spring up in advancing years, even when it has but slightly shown itself before. The only thorough preservative against it, at any age, is that "answer of a good conscience," which gives us inward peace, by filling us with the blessed consciousness that we are walking in God's ways, and in His favour. A half will, a weak struggle, and a keen conscience, will make any one irritable. It is not the question whether, our past sins being forgiven, we have a blessed hope of final salvation; we may have that, and yet be restless and irritable, because we know that God having done so much for us, we are not doing our utmost for Him. This is the consciousness which makes us dissatisfied with ourselves, and, as a necessary consequence, inclined to be dissatisfied with others. The "peace which passeth understanding" cannot coexist with anything but the offering of a whole heart, a steadfast will; and there is no other peace which can really soothe the susceptibilities of an irritable temper.

With sullenness or moodiness we are perhaps dealing most wisely when we leave it to itself, and take no notice of it. A very large proportion of this wrong temper will probably be found to arise from morbid self-consciousness. Children, young people, and a great many who are not young, like to know that others are thinking of and watching them, even

when they are out of humour. They are not aware of being affected, and there is no actual pretence of feeling, but there is an unconscious exaggeration, proceeding from the desire to attract notice. Leave them to themselves, and this will die away. They will be tired of making themselves disagreeable for no purpose, and will by degrees recover their usual tone. When the mood has passed, it will be well to speak seriously about it, and show how inconsistent it is with Christian principle; but, at the time, such exhortations will only serve to ncrease the self-consciousness, and so to strengthen the mood. But after all, nothing can be done to cure, or even really to check, a sullen, moody temper, until, through God's grace, it is conquered from within. The feelings which give rise to it are too secret and complicated for us to reach. We may, indeed, observe the circumstances which seem to bring on the mood, and frame our own words and conduct so as to avoid arousing it unnecessarily; but even this is very difficult; for children and young people must be reproved, and yet it is reproof which most often makes them sullen. A few words on the fault which is to be noticed, spoken gently, but decidedly, will, with such dispositions, be found better than an endeavour to touch the feelings. And especially we must guard against any irritating preambles, such as, "Now, my dear, I know you don't like to be spoken to, but I must tell you so and so." Dragging secondary faults to light in this way is irritating to the temper, and the reproof or the advice which may follow will in consequence be taken amiss.

There is one more form of evil temper which we

may very likely be called upon to combat with, but which must be encountered with very different weapons from those employed in other cases. We have all no doubt met with some instance of a jealous temper—a most miserable thing for its possessor, and a source of unnumbered evils to those who have to deal with it. And yet, strange though the advice may seem, probably our only way of gaining influence over it for good is to begin by sympathizing with it. It is such intense pain, and it so shrouds itself in the garb of love; we shall only repel and make the wounded heart shut itself up with its own misery, if we begin at once to speak of it as a sin. Feel with it, pity it, gain its confidence, and soothe it; and then say, "This is natural, but it is wrong, and there is but one cure for it—to make a sacrifice for the happiness of the person of whom you are jealous. That being done, there will be the sense of God's loving approbation, and 'when He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?'" [1] There is, however, another kind of jealousy, which does not pretend to be based upon love; jealousy of power, of admiration, of influence. This is really nothing but selfishness, and it should be treated as such, called by its true name, and shown to be despicable. But the idea of punishing jealousy in any form is absurd. We can but place it in its true light, and then leave it to God, through the working of His Holy Spirit upon the conscience, to correct it.

We are, indeed, apt generally to deceive ourselves as to the power we possess of controlling children's tem-

[1] Job xxxiv. 29.

pers. Bad temper of any kind is so very trying, it destroys so completely anything like domestic happiness, that we constantly find ourselves having recourse to any expedient which may suggest itself in order to keep off its outbursts; and when we have succeeded we boast of our success, and flatter ourselves that the temper is cured. But to pet and humour a bad temper is really only to encourage it. Be it passionate, or moody, or irritable, it becomes in this way the tyrant of a household; no one has the courage to oppose it. It is very curious, indeed, to watch the effect which it produces. Except in very exaggerated cases, we know that it will exhibit itself in nothing worse than words and manner, and these cannot really injure us; yet there are probably very few persons who would not as soon go through the ordeal of sitting down in a dentist's chair, unknowing what pain may be in store for them, as deliberately encounter an outburst of violent temper, or suffer from irritability and moodiness. And thus it is that we run away from temper, speak smooth words to it, do anything rather than provoke it. And, unless duty calls upon us to confront it, this is a wise course to adopt. But if we treat children in a similar way, we are doing them an irreparable injury. The little tyrant of the nursery becomes the bully of the school, and the imperious lord of a household; and so the evil nature is fostered, and strengthened, until it has become so confirmed a habit that it is not looked upon as a sin; and the man goes down to his grave with the burden of violent, uncharitable words and deeds upon his conscience, and wakes in another world to find himself in the presence of Him who has numbered

"hatred, wrath, and strife" as amongst the "works of the flesh," and bids us remember that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." [1] Surely, then, it is incumbent upon us to take warning in time, and allow neither ourselves nor our children to be in the slightest degree self-deceived upon this question of ill-temper.

The caution is most important for girls as well as boys. A woman's temper is seldom perhaps as violent as a man's, but when once excited it is more ungovernable. And irritability and sullenness are, it must be remembered, just as much offences in God's sight as passion; and how many homes are made miserable, how many hearts are saddened, and how much love is checked, and in the end extinguished, by the indulgence of what is called a disagreeable or an irritable temper, in the gentle-mannered, soft-voiced, perhaps, attractive girl, who in society is the object of universal admiration!

[1] Gal. v. 22, 23.

CHAPTER V.

PURITY.

SIDE by side with Truth surely we must place Purity; or rather, may we not look upon truth as the guardian—the protector of purity? For it can only be through the instrumentality of sophistry, self-deceit, and false imaginings, that any woman ceases to be, in however slight a degree, modest and refined in word and deed. The instinct which tells her that the reverse of this character is wrong, is as innate as the perception of truth; and nothing but falsehood—though a falsehood to which her own will consents—can lead her to think the contrary.

And it is to this instinct, this inborn sense of what is pure, that we are all accustomed to trust, for the most part implicitly, in the education of young girls. Time was, indeed, when it was thought necessary to use plain words and strong language—to call vice by direct names. Those were days which we look upon as evil—we could not bear them now. We cannot read the literature of those times unless in expurgated editions. We know that we should be unable to tolerate the manners and the conversation which then were thought perfectly admissible.

We have adopted another theory; we say, coarse

words bring coarse ideas: we feel that God has mercifully left a remnant of the innocence of Paradise in the natural purity of a young girl's mind, and we believe that woe will be to us if, through any imprudent anxiety, or over caution, we should give rise to a thought of evil which, left to itself, the mind would never have suggested. And, acting upon this theory, we leave—or at least we think that we leave—young girls to themselves; taking, perhaps, one precaution, that the books they read should be, on the whole, unobjectionable. If we are very strict, we reject novels altogether; if we are not, we admit, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, a few—the very best; but at any rate we keep a watch over girls' reading, and we are careful that they should not form what we consider to be injurious friendships; and then we trust them—to nature.

And what is the result? Most highly satisfactory! Are not our English girls the very models of all that is refined, delicate, and modest? Is it not a delight to watch them wherever they are congregated together? Have they not beauty, freshness, grace, freedom of tone without familiarity—ease of manner without forwardness?

There is a rumour, indeed, that they are becoming "fast"; that they are beginning to like to make themselves conspicuous; that they wish not only to look like men, but to talk and act like them. It is even asserted that they are more acquainted than a few years since would have been thought credible, with the evil which abounds in the world, and are more tolerant of it. But all this we choose to consider a mere question of fashion. It is, we say, a wave of

folly which will sweep over the surface of society and retire, leaving it very much what it was before. English girls are modest and pure-minded: they must be so. It is a scandal and offence to suppose it possible that they can be the contrary. And so again we smile at such young follies, and fold our hands, and perhaps sigh; and then leave our girls—to nature! It is too sad to disturb such a pleasant dream—too cruel to suggest suspicions—to speak of the need of warning, the necessity of watchfulness. If the Eye of God were as the eye of man, and Heaven could be won by fair appearances, one might almost say that we have good reason to be satisfied.

Almost! But there is another side to the picture—a side to which we seldom turn—which we dare not let the pure young minds of our children think upon—which we scarcely venture to think upon ourselves. It comes to us in the form of penitentiaries, refuges, reformatories; intended—so we think—for the lower classes; for those who have no such safeguards, no such examples, as our children have. The inmates of those moral hospitals are the lowest of the low now; they must, we suppose, have been so always.

True—they are the lowest of the low; none but themselves can tell how low. In the "lowest deep" a "lower deep" has opened for them, and they have sunk into it. True also, that, except in some most sad cases, they have not generally belonged to what are exclusively called the upper classes. Those who, in the upper classes, sin like them, have money, and rank, and friends, and flatterers, to shield them. They can brave the world, even as they brave their God;

and the world will suffer them to go their way, and even bow down itself before them. Yet these mournful harbours for the all-but lost do too often include amongst their inmates English girls, brought up in quiet homes, under seemingly good influences, without any apparently great temptations—girls left to the teachings and warnings of nature; and who, in outward manners, have been just as modest, just as retiring, though they may not have been just as elegant and cultivated, as their sisters of the higher ranks. When we boast of the purity and delicacy of English girls and English women, we may not take the happy majority who have been saved from open transgression, and put aside the miserable minority who have fallen into it. God looks down equally upon all.

Can the condition of England in this respect be well pleasing in His sight?

Yet still further. Let us ask ourselves what purity means—what it really is. Purity before God. No thought, no wish, no feeling, which may not be brought into His presence, and there welcomed and blessed!

It is the inheritance of Angels; and whilst still dwelling in this body of sin and death, we may think that we cannot hope for it. But can we be contented with less for ourselves? Can we seek for less in others? Will any right-minded mother, any true friend, endure for an instant the idea that the child whom she loves is to sit down satisfied without it? We bear with imperfect temper, with lingering selfishness, with unsubdued pride—we can love and cherish all that is good in the character, even whilst

we recognize the existence of these qualities of evil—but we cannot so bear with what is not pure. To admit the possibility of it in children involves the destruction of an ideal; and because this is painful to us we close our eyes to what we do not like to see, and say, "God has given the instinct of purity to a young girl, and nature will guard it. We need not trouble ourselves with it, except so far as to be careful that nothing shall approach to mar it."

And even while the words are uttered, there must be some from the depths of whose hearts a voice arises telling them they speak foolishly. The ideal child has not—they are but too truly aware of it—in their case expanded into the ideal girl and woman. They know that they were once thought to be what they were not; and, because of that involuntary deception, they know also that they have had to work out for themselves a bitter experience of their own weakness, from which a word of warning might have saved them. And yet they continue the like dream with regard to others; they will not believe what they know, but what they wish; and so they in their turn form an ideal of purity, and simplicity, and modesty, and call it their child;—and then thank God for giving it them, and consider that their work is done.

In thus acting, persons follow a principle directly opposite to that which has been proved to be necessary in other cases. We all know the revolution which the principle of reasoning from induction has effected in natural science. Both sceptics and believers are, at the present moment, clamorous that it should be applied to the study of revelation. Why, then, is it to be discarded in morals? We may say, because it

is not needed; because the truth of the present theory is proved by its results. We cannot wish our young girls to be different from what they are, and therefore we are content with the system which has trained them.

A satisfactory and wise answer, if only it were founded upon true premisses. We cannot wish our young girls to be different from what they are! How do we know what they are? If purity be, as surely it is, that perfect spotlessness of deed and word, and thought, which God can look upon and bless, then we may be quite sure that these young people, simple-minded, innocent as they appear, and as in a certain sense, no doubt, they are—are not pure. And if any, looking into their own hearts now, and recalling the memories of their childhood, can see occasion for bitter regret and humiliation before God, though there may be no shadow of reproach in the sight of man; surely, by the most evident reasoning from analogy, there is cause to fear—more than to fear—to believe, that the same dangers are lying in wait for the children of the present day; and it is our imperative necessity, our bounden duty, so far as it lies in our power, to shield them from them.

The real secret of all this wilful delusion is, that although theoretically we desire purity both for ourselves and our children, yet practically we content ourselves with a standard short of that which God requires.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[1]

The immediate Presence, the visible Majesty and

[1] St. Matt. v. 8.

Holiness of the Almighty, and our own hearts! Can we bear even the juxtaposition of the two ideas?

And yet it is to the pure in heart alone that the promise is given. However unattainable such purity may appear, we are nevertheless commanded to strive after it. And though the merits of our Redeemer form the only title of admission to Heaven, yet it is that same Redeemer who says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." [1]

To place anything short of purity of *heart* before us as our aim, is to fall short of God's command, to risk being of the number of those who shall never "see God."

How is it, then, with us? What is it we look for in these young girls, so innocent, that they may be left without fear to the guidance of nature? We reply; —they are irreproachable before man, society cannot frown upon them, envy will not sneer at them, scandal dares not whisper against them; and we are satisfied. We wish for nothing more. The world's standard is our standard, and we have succeeded in attaining it. True, there are rumours of hidden evil, which at times reach our ears, but it is not pleasant to listen to them. True, we are at times startled by some terrible catastrophe which wrecks the happiness of quiet homes; but those are rare exceptions. They are not to be taken as the ground of reasoning and action. True, also, that the dress of these modest English girls is a subject for sarcasm to all other nations; but the world, society, custom, sanction it; we should be ridiculed if we attempted to alter it.

[1] St. Matt. v. 48.

We need not ask what God says upon these subjects, it is sufficient if man approves. The young daughters of England are what we wish them to be, what we are determined they shall be. "Blessed are the pure" —as man reckons purity;—we may not doubt that they shall one day "see God!" [1]

Now let us turn to the Bible.

It is a very startling—one may even say a very uncomfortable—book. It does not in the least recognize this innate purity, this perfect simplicity and innocence which we so fondly dwell upon. The facts of the Bible and the facts of the world harmonize exactly; but the theory of the Bible and the theory of the world do not harmonize in the least. The Bible has a code of laws for men and women, for boys and girls alike. The world says they are not needed for the last, because nature herself is their law. And this difference makes the Bible, as it has been said, a startling book. No doubt there are portions of it which, though absolutely necessary as parts of legislation, were never intended for general use; but putting aside these, the Bible certainly does take it for granted that purity of heart and life is a thing to be prayed for, striven for, watched for, by all alike. It uses very plain language upon these subjects, which of course, being in the Bible, is right and necessary. But we could not possibly use such language ourselves! What effect it has upon the young girls who listen to it we do not know, and we would rather not inquire. So we leave it. It is the only thing to be done in all these

[1] St. Matt. v. 8.

matters—we leave it. Nature, time, common sense, will bring it all right.

Let it be so. Since we trust so much to this education of nature, it will do us no harm to inquire what it is likely to be.

We will look into a nursery. The education of nature begins there. There are two or three rooms, closely adjoining,—a day nursery, and night nurseries. Four or five children are congregated in them—boys and girls—varying probably in age from seven years old, downwards. The youngest is a baby, scarcely looked upon as a human being, and treated accordingly. There are nurses—one or two, as the case may be—who have been brought up in country villages, accustomed, probably, to the use of one bedroom for a family, and looking upon two as a complete luxury of decency. To them, it is quite a thing of course, that boys and girls, at that early age, should be herded together indiscriminately. The children have not yet arrived at the dignity of *he* and *she*, they are simply *its*, and so they play, and romp, and dress, and undress, and the little doll baby is tossed about, and nursery questions are discussed, and arrangements made, and the idea of paying attention to the ordinary decorums and proprieties of grown-up persons is totally set aside. The children live a life in public, and, as a natural result, they do not wish for anything else. They have no idea what privacy means. The theory of nature, however, says that it is not needed, for that little girls have an instinctive delicacy, which is, in fact, their most precious gift. Poets rave about it, and fathers and mothers dream about it. The little creatures, when dressed in their best clothes and

taken down into the drawing-room, are looked upon as angels of modesty. But—it is strange—they are not quite the same in the nursery. There, they are often rude, and unrefined, and wanting in delicacy. The nurses are obliged to caution them before they go into the drawing-room, and sometimes, in spite of the caution, they will do and say very unpleasant things. But it is all simplicity—nature! The mother leaves them to nature. They know no harm. How, then, can they be capable of it?

But the time arrives when some change must be made. The boys go to school, the girls have a governess at home. They leave the nursery, and they have bedrooms of their own; two, possibly three, occupying the same apartment. Very comfortable pleasant rooms they are,—delightful for the public life to which the children have been accustomed; but privacy—still there is none. What need is there of it? The little girls who have always been together, who have not a thought concealed from one another, who are absolutely one in taste, and feeling, and sympathy, cannot require, or even wish for the arrangements which would be essential with grown-up persons and strangers. And there is nothing in the outward behaviour of the children to lead any one to suspect that this unrestrained, unguarded familiarity is doing them the least harm. The little improprieties of the nursery have all passed away. In society they are retiring; to their parents they are obedient. If there was a tendency to rudeness and indecorum when they were very little, it was mere simplicity. Now, they have arrived at the age of shyness and modesty, and

nature is still more delightful in its training. It must guide them aright!

There are, however, a few circumstances which are not quite satisfactory. The governess says that she has occasionally heard a few words of conversation pass between these children upon subjects which it was not fitting they should discuss; and she has seen smiles and side glances, which give her an idea that the children know some things which it would be better they should not know; she doubts if they are quite as simple-minded as they appear. But the mother is incredulous. "What evil can her girls have learnt? So carefully as they have been guarded from all objectionable companionship, kept entirely under her own eye, and at such a very early age! At seventeen or eighteen, of course, young people will be silly, and talk of love and romance; but little girls of ten, eleven, and twelve, who have been well brought up, can know nothing and say nothing which the whole world might not hear." An appeal is made to the nurse. She also is incredulous and even indignant. "The young ladies have never learnt any harm from any one to her knowledge. Now and then they have asked odd questions, but she has always told them they were not to trouble themselves about things which did not concern them. They would know all about it when they grew up, but it was no matter to them whilst they were children."

An answer, of course, consummate in its wisdom! Not in the least stimulating to a child's curiosity! At any rate, the mother is satisfied. The governess, however, is not so, and she is all the more uncom-

fortable at her suspicions, because, as she says, "she has always been so extremely careful to keep the children's minds innocent. Awkward passages are met with in history, and, indeed, in the Bible. There are some things even in the Catechism, which are not pleasant; but she has always passed them over as rapidly as possible. She has never allowed the least comment upon them. If the children have asked for explanations of things which could not be explained, she has said very much what the nurse said: that those subjects did not concern little girls, and they had better not think about them."

The state of the little girls' minds cannot, however, be ascertained, because the very fact of examination would create the evil which is dreaded. Before any person can tell whether he or she has committed a fault, it must first be understood what the fault is.

No. There is nothing to be done but to be still more particular, and to fall back upon nature for comfort. The children were born pure-minded: they have heard and seen nothing to make them the reverse,—therefore, they are pure-minded! And in this full confidence in nature and simplicity, the children are left more and more to themselves, and allowed free intercourse with the young friends who have been chosen to be their companions. As occasion arises, they share the same room with them, and are on terms of the same entire familiarity as with their sisters. No one suspects the slightest evil. They do, indeed, sit up too late, and gossip together over the fireside; but all girls will do this; and they are so young, it is impossible that any

harm can arise, except, perhaps, to their health; and they do not meet often enough for this to be really injured by late hours!

They are so young! There lies the fallacy. If these girls were some years older, there would be comparatively little danger. They would then have acquired the habits of outward delicacy and refinement which society gives; and they would not choose to lower themselves by conversation of which they ought to be ashamed. But at twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, this shyness does not exist. If young girls are then herded together without care, and if they have had their first delicacy of feeling blunted by neglect in the nursery, they will do and say whatever suggests itself at the moment, with all the more zest, because they are conscious, though they know not why, that it is forbidden. And thus it is that hundreds of young minds are contaminated. And how deep that contamination in some cases is, we should probably be very much shocked if we could know. But whatever the amount of the mischief may be in man's judgment, it must be great in the sight of God; for it is the first mark laid upon that modesty of nature, which is His most precious gift to woman; and which, under no circumstances, can be injured without the consent of her own will. Neither can we forget, that when a girl of fourteen or fifteen, ventures to speak to another girl of her own age, upon subjects which she would shrink from mentioning to a person whom she respects, she has opened the door to very grave evil. Possibly, it may not enter; but possibly also—very possibly, it may.

It is not because sin is hidden that it does not

exist. There are many who, through God's mercy, pass through life actually ignorant of the terrible dangers which beset the paths of others. They shrink from the knowledge of evil; and who shall blame them? But unless they face the fact that this evil does exist, although they may never have been brought into personal contact with it, they act but like the ostrich, "which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding." [1]

No one becomes wholly wicked at once. The sin which shocks us in its development in mature age, had its germ in childhood and youth; and in the case under discussion that germ is unquestionably to be found in the tainted mind which, in the indulgence of a morbid curiosity, tampered with subjects, deadly to those who approach them without sanction, though perfectly harmless when met with in the path of duty.

Society, indeed, does not utterly discountenance anything but declared vice. But even that must have had a beginning. When the thoughts are pure, the words will be pure, and when the words are pure, so also will be the deeds. But let thoughts and words once be tainted, and it is only God's merciful interposing Providence which keeps any human being from open shame.

[1] Job xxxix. 14-17.

And is there no disgrace, even public disgrace, short of that which is absolute ruin? Is it not disgrace to overstep the modesty of a woman's nature? to be bold in tone and language? to stand upon the brink of sin, and give rise to the suspicion that we may have plunged into it? Is it not disgrace when young girls do and say things which make their brothers blush for them? when they find amusement and satisfaction in books in which the fundamental principles of morality are utterly set aside?

How could fashion overcome nature, and convert the shy retiring girl into the fast young lady, if the mind had not first lost its delicacy? There may be a fashion in the shape of a bonnet, or the trimming of a dress, and it may vary with the variations of fancy, and leave no trace behind it. But the change from modesty to immodesty is no question of fashion. It cannot take place without a corresponding change in the inward being; and if the manners of English girls are becoming, what is popularly termed "fast," it is because the minds of English girls are losing their native purity. And the disgrace of that loss, who may estimate?

It seems a very hard thing to say;—so many there are who do as others do without thought, and so many cases there may be in which young girls are led into a style of behaviour in itself objectionable, merely because they have not the courage to stand aloof and confess their inward shrinking from it. So also in many cases the motto "Honi soit qui mal y pense," is perfectly true and applicable; and yet excuse, argue as we may, the main fact remains.

Things are done and said which are unrefined, indelicate, immodest, and they cannot proceed from a pure source.

And if they do not,—if a girl's mind is not pure,—if her own instincts are so blunted that she cannot *feel* evil before she can explain it,—if she cannot shrink from it without knowing why she does so,—may God help her! for the wisest safeguards which the best of friends may provide for her will never be sufficient to secure her from danger.

We have looked at the worst consequences of this early initiation into the knowledge of evil; but there is a brighter side to the subject. No one, however strict, would for a moment assert that these early offences are so ineffaceable, that the mind, once tainted, can never be restored to purity. God's grace, and an earnest will, and an incessant watchfulness, will work marvels in the way of such restoration; but even then it will never be anything but restoration. The scars will always remain; visible to the inward eye, though unseen by man, and, as we may humbly trust, blotted out by God. And they will not only be seen as scars, disfigurements, but they will be felt as wounds; they will give the pain of wounds; an ever increasing pain as the spirit longs more and more intensely for that purity of heart bestowed upon them who shall hereafter "see God."

And we, by our ignorance, our absence of watchfulness in infancy and childhood, have been, perhaps, the authors of that pain! We have left a stain upon our children's memories; a thought of sorrowful reproach. "Oh that I had been warned! that I

had not been left to the workings of my own mind! that I had learnt in infancy to be ashamed of those things which I felt to be evil, though I knew not why! But I was left without a word of caution, and now I can but struggle to forget, what with that caution I might never have learnt."

Is not such a thought sufficient to rouse us to watchfulness? If we long for our children's happiness, is it possible we can be indifferent to the pang arising from that deep humiliation to a mind striving after purity—the consciousness of evil thoughts, the result of evil knowledge wilfully acquired?—a consciousness which may haunt those who are exposed to it through life, and never leave them until the gracious sentence of final acceptance is passed; and renewed, re-made in the Image of Christ, they are once more pure, even as He is pure.

And this, let it be remembered, is the best—the very best—that we can hope for any one who has wilfully tampered with the knowledge of evil; who has wilfully marred that blessed simplicity which is indeed, as mothers so delight to think, the inheritance of their young daughters, and which, if only guarded in childhood and youth, would never be lost, whatever might be their lot in after life.

"Unto the pure, all things are pure." [1] The deep meaning of that saying perhaps nothing but the experience of years can teach us. We begin life shrinking from words and facts; we end by acknowledging that words and facts have no power to hurt us. Evil is that which is contrary to God's law. Whatever

[1] Titus i. 15.

therefore is in accordance with God's law is not evil; and it is only evil which we have any cause to dread. There are women, in our own day, who are brought into immediate contact with all that is most repulsive and degraded in the sight of purity; and we look upon them as doing the work of saints. We see others tending the sick, performing the lowest, most menial, and even loathsome offices, and we say that they are following the footsteps of ministering angels. Given the sense of duty, necessity, labour for the good of others, and there is nothing which may not be done, or spoken, or endured. The facts which taint the mind ineffaceably when learnt through the indulgence of a wrong curiosity, leave no taint when they come before us in the path of duty, or in the course of nature. And the mind which is the most simple, which has the least affinity with evil, will be found by experience to be the bravest in confronting it. We dread that which contaminates us; but the sense of contamination arises from something in our own hearts. God looks upon sin, and in the power of His Omnipresence dwells in the midst of it. But He is not affected by it. If we were Angels, we should not dread contact with any evil; and therefore if we would serve God as the Angels serve Him, we must seek for that purity of heart which will enable us to be fearless like them.

It is from thus unconsciously despising the teaching of God, that mothers will sometimes forbid their daughters to go amongst the cottages of the poor, lest they should hear or see things which may shock

their delicacy; whilst they allow them to sit half the day in easy chairs, reading doubtful novels; not perceiving that they are thus fostering in them habits of indolent self-indulgence, which in themselves have seeds of far deeper evil, of the very nature they dread, than any they may think to shelter them from.

The rule which has been mentioned holds good universally. In the ordinary affairs of life, the moral courage, the perfect simplicity, the good sense which can face what is wrong, and grapple with and overcome it, will almost always be found existing in exact proportion to real purity of heart. There are evils in the world which we all more or less know, which we all more or less deplore, but which we all unite in ignoring, because we shrink from acknowledging them. We put a varnish over everything. We refine our language till the condemnation which God pronounces against sin is felt to be unreadable. We make use of periphrastic expressions, and think that by so doing we do away with unpleasant facts. We picture to ourselves an ideal world, filled with ideal people, and imagine that in this way we make the real world more pure. But vice does not lose its evil when it loses its coarseness. Sin is not the less sin, because we dress it in silk and satin, and call it fashion; and purity is not the more pure, because, in dread, it turns away its face from defilement, and will not own its existence. On the contrary, real purity is essentially allied with truth. And when it is through God's grace ours, we shall be able to confront life as it is, we shall not fear to see it in its true colours, *so far as that knowledge is need-*

ful for God's service, though not one degree beyond; and we shall turn away in greater disgust from the shams and pretences of virtue than from the most openly acknowledged vice.

If there is one proof stronger than another of the unreality of the so-called refinement of the present day, it is to be found in the literature which can be tolerated, and even admired. Shakespeare is felt to be, in many parts, unreadable. The Bible itself makes us uncomfortable; but we can take up a novel —English or French, as it may happen—there is often very little to choose between them—and dwell with satisfactory excitement upon the most insidious and highly coloured pictures of the approaches to vice, if not of vice itself, so long as the unpleasant names which belong to it, are avoided. If we were to meet with them, we should be compelled at once to put the volume aside. It does not signify what the evil may be which is suggested; if it is not called evil, it is supposed to do no harm. And why? Because society allows it. Because society has its own standard of purity, and if a book does not fall short of this, it may be admitted into the drawing-room, and even find a place in the young ladies' boudoir. Names,—names are the things we fear! Not thoughts, not feelings, too often not even deeds—only names! Save us from these, and we give up all else, as merely a question of fashion, and the manners of the times.

Is this an exaggeration? Our own consciences must answer.

And now, what is the remedy? If the dream of natural purity is destroyed; if evil really works insidiously, and, when it has entered the heart, hides

itself from our view, how is it possible to guard against it?

We must go back again to the nursery, and seek for the answer in the analogy of nature, and physical purity. Those little infants whom we watch so unweariedly, require to be tended with the greatest care, simply in order that they may be kept now, and learn by degrees to keep themselves, in that condition of cleanliness which is essential for their bodily well being. If we do not thus accustom them to external purity, they will become insensible to it. Why this should be, is a problem, which, it would seem, can only be solved by recognizing the condition of a fallen nature. Faces and hands, for instance, require very frequent washing. In themselves, as God made them, they are clean; but, though dirt is repulsive and disgusting, there is nothing more difficult than to make a child keep itself as God made it. We are therefore very particular in enforcing nursery habits of cleanliness. We do not trust to nature,—to the fact that God has given the child a perception of cleanliness, and an appreciation of it; but we think it necessary to cultivate and educate that perception, till it becomes a habit. And so, as time goes on, we find the results of this education. The children themselves shrink from anything which is not clean. They guard themselves in a measure, though it is long before they can be entirely trusted to do so. As they grow up, and are thrown more upon their own guidance, and placed in new positions, they necessarily learn more of the existence of the many painful, loathsome spectacles that are to be seen in the world. Poverty, illness, ignorance, vice, force it

upon them. They learn to think of it, talk of it, reason about it. They are compelled to do so. It is their duty. And this must be the case not only with men, but with women. But there is no real contamination in consequence. Even if they are brought into temporary contact with it, it does not adhere to them. When called upon to discuss it, they are enabled to do so by the means of technical phrases, which present the abstract idea of what is meant; but give no distinct image of it to the eye. It is indeed this power of seizing upon abstract ideas, and conveying them to one another, which enables us in the least to carry on the necessary business of every-day life. Without it, we should all rush from one another into the wilderness and the desert, shrinking from the view of the infirmities of our common nature. And so it happens that although this world is a very dirty world, yet men and women can contrive to live in it satisfactorily, with a fair amount of cleanliness and comfort; and even more than this, with real physical enjoyment from freshness and purity. They do so, be it observed, not by ignoring the fact that dirt exists, still less by closely examining it, but simply by recognizing and guarding against it.

And from the analogy of these simple facts we may learn how to deal with the question of moral purity.

Children are in one sense pure, even as in one sense they are clean; that is to say, they have no knowledge of actual evil; but they bear about with them a fallen nature, and if left to themselves that nature will speedily develop itself. The first thing to be done, then, is to guard against such development. God has very mercifully aided us in this task,

by making it part of a woman's nature to shrink from anything which is wanting in delicacy and modesty: but this instinct is very much stronger in youth than it is in infancy and childhood. At first it is scarcely perceptible, and it requires to be fostered just as much as the sense of truth, or the habit of obedience. We punish a child severely for telling us a falsehood; why do we not punish it just as severely for saying or doing anything which is not refined or modest? We should be shocked at the idea of placing our little ones in positions which would lead them naturally to want of truthfulness: does it never strike us that their nursery habits must lead them naturally to want of delicacy? It may be difficult to know how to manage with them; but the fact that it is more easy to herd them together as little animals, than to treat them as beings born for Heaven, does not make it right to do so. Thought, good sense, care, and watchfulness, will do wonders. It is the principle which is needed, and it can always be enforced by a few rigid rules. Grown-up persons are often thrown together in what would be very uncomfortable familiarity if they did not consult each other's convenience and feelings: why may not children be taught to do the same?

Mothers are extremely strict in maintaining the nursery regulations which they think concern their children's health; it would be very little increase of difficulty if they would take the trouble to make and to maintain a few regulations which concern their delicacy and purity. And when once established, the latter would be much more easily kept than the former, because nature then would become the assistant.

The refinement of feeling which was scarcely perceptible at the beginning would strengthen day by day with habit; and at length the children themselves would shrink from doing or saying anything which was not in accordance with modesty. And any offence against these regulations should be punished sharply and instantly. It is said that when Benvenuto Cellini was a boy, his father thought he saw a salamander come out of the fire, and pointing out the marvel to his child, he gave him a box on the ears, that he might remember all his life that he had seen the creature. A similar box on the ears would be a very great help in teaching a child to remember when it has been guilty of any offence against delicacy. Warnings, grave reproofs, and good advice, are worse than thrown away in such cases, for the child no more understands the nature of its misdeeds than Benvenuto Cellini understood the nature of the salamander. What is wanted is not comprehension, but obedience; only, in order to obey, there must be commands—definite and rendered practicable—which shall be based upon those common rules of decorum that must be observed in after years, and which should be enforced on the nurse as well as the children.

It must be confessed that this enforcement will be no easy task. Education begins in the nursery, and yet it is there that parents must trust a great deal to persons who too often are very unfitted for the charge they undertake.

Good nurses are rare, and bad ones may do incalculable mischief. And if children live entirely in the nursery, or apart from their mother's superintendence, it is no marvel that they acquire habits which may

be their ruin. So also persons who have small houses and small incomes cannot make the same comfortable arrangements for their children as those who are more fortunately circumstanced. The very best theoretical laws may be laid down with regard to nursery habits and discipline, but it may be next to impossible to carry them out efficiently, either because the nurse is incompetent, or the nursery is inconvenient. No system of nursery training of any kind can indeed be suggested which is certain to work satisfactorily. The very fact that it is a system is against it. What is wanted is principle, and for this the mother is responsible. She must form her rules according to the capabilities of her household. But when the right principle is once firmly established in her own mind, there can be no doubt that God's blessing will rest upon her efforts to enforce it in act. If children cannot have entire privacy, at least they may have it partially. If boys and girls cannot be completely separated, at least precaution may be taken to avoid their being thrown together without care. Arrangements may be made with regard to time. Habits may be strictly watched. The nurse may be taught that neglect upon these points will never be overlooked. Only teach the little creatures, who have as yet but a dormant sense of right and wrong with regard to these subjects, that they are to take no liberties, to practise no rudenesses in the nursery which would not be allowed in the drawing-room, and then the instinct of modesty, delicacy, purity, which is God's precious gift, will, through His blessing, be retained uninjured. The teaching will be still that of nature, but it will be nature as it came from the

Hands of God, not as it has been corrupted and defiled by fallen man. And when the lesson of modesty and refinement is learnt in the nursery, the task of instilling it as a principle to be acted upon, when children are left to themselves, is well-nigh completed. The little girls may perfectly well share the same room. They will only require arrangements for privacy such as they have always been accustomed to. And as they have learnt to be modest in deed, so they will be modest in words. That blessed, hallowed instinct, which God has given them, and which has never been blunted, will be their safeguard into whatever companionship they may be thrown; and though they will not be entirely free from danger, it will be danger infinitely lessened.

Only one point will then require special warning and watchfulness. As the absence of sensitiveness is the source of evil in the case of a little child, so curiosity is the source of evil in youth. It grows with the growth of the intellect, and to stop its working is next to impossible. We may check, and reprove, and it will hide itself from us, but it will work still. Here again, for the sake of society, for the sake of the souls of our children, for our own sake, let us not delude ourselves by dreams, or think by refusing to look at a difficulty, to escape it! We have seen how nurses and governesses, for the most part, meet the queries put to them. They defer the answer to some future time, upon which the child's mind of course rests, with eager expectation, as the period when all things mysterious are to be made known. But God deals with these questions in a very different way. From its infancy, the child is made to perceive two facts

which, in its own mind, unconsciously stand to each other, though in a vague way, in the relation of cause and effect;—one is, that the habits of married life are different from those of single life; and the other that the birth of a little brother or sister is connected with its mother's suffering and illness.

Nature, which is God's Voice, never told a child that babies grow in beanfields, or are brought as presents by the doctor! But nurses talk this kind of nonsense, no one reproving them for it; and then of course there arises a mystery and perplexity in the child's mind. Nature and the nurse are at variance. Curiosity is awakened, and in time, in spite of all our care, it will be gratified unlawfully, to the injury, in every way, of the moral sense. And that, because we choose to make ourselves wiser than our Creator, and to suppose that it is possible for the mind to be tainted by following the guidance of nature and common sense; and kept pure by ignoring what must be known as soon as reason begins to work; if it be only through the plain words of the Bible, and the services of the Church.

Again, mothers and governesses meet with awkward passages in history—and histories are unquestionably very often most wrongly and unnecessarily coarse—and they slur them over, they hurry by them. Probably, they imagine that because the children ask for no explanation, therefore they seek for none. They are very grievously mistaken. Those little minds are working in secret, and will by no means rest satisfied with having words and facts slurred over. If curiosity is stronger than principle, the children will seek to be enlightened by books,—forbidden books,—dictionaries, and such like. If they

have, in the slightest degree, lost their delicacy, and blunted their natural instinct, they will talk upon these subjects amongst themselves—with companions —not impossibly with brothers; for brothers, unless very carefully warned, will injure their little sisters' minds, in some cases irretrievably. And how has such mischief arisen? Simply, because instead of listening to nature, reason, and the Bible, those who have had the care of the children have taken the mock proprieties of the world to be their guide, and have followed the impulse of moral cowardice, and averted their faces from a difficulty instead of confronting it.

If there is one thing more patent than another to the apprehension of the whole world, including children as well as men and women, it is the sacredness of the marriage vow—the allegiance due from a wife to her husband—from a husband to his wife. When a wife forsakes her husband, or a husband forsakes his wife, and cleaves to another, it is a breach of the Seventh Commandment. Thus far any child can understand, and thus far surely any parent or teacher can explain. It is the explanation which St. Paul gives in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and if, *forestalling questions*, we would give it of our own accord, the little mind would, for a considerable time, rest satisfied.

And this same kind of matter-of-fact explanation is ready for us in many other cases of similar difficulty. Marriages are events of great ceremony. Religion and the law of the land are alike required to sanction them. If persons despise this necessity, and choose to live together as husband and wife

without having made, solemnly and publicly, the vows required, their children are not acknowledged as legitimate; and they, themselves, are stigmatized by certain names, commonly met with in history and in the Bible.

It is really necessary to give these illustrations, because the wonderful want of common sense, the wrong mystery frequently exhibited in connection with these subjects, does more irreparable injury than any one without experience and knowledge of facts could possibly imagine. We come back, again and again, to the same truth. No knowledge which God gives by nature, or which comes to us in the way of duty and necessity, can do us harm; but the knowledge which we seek for ourselves, to gratify an evil curiosity, will leave a wound which, on this side the grave, may never be entirely healed.

Before a child's strength of principle can be trusted, the temptation of curiosity must, then, as far as possible, be forestalled. When the occasion presents itself naturally, tell what must be known, and tell it simply, without comment, or caution, or haste; above all, without any show of mystery, but as a mere question of fact. In speaking in this way we are, as in the other cases alluded to, following the guidance both of nature and of the Bible. Every woman feels that if disagreeable subjects must be discussed, she can bear the ordeal perfectly well so long as what is said is put in a dry, business-like form. The subject then passes from the mind, and is forgotten. But the moment there is any apology made, or any hesitation or shyness evinced, she shrinks back pained, and, probably, disgusted; and the unpleasant im-

pression of the conversation remains; perhaps for years. From the same instinct a woman will pardon a coarse word which may shock her refinement, whilst a *double entendre* is felt to be unpardonable. And is not this one amongst many reasons why the facts and the warnings of the Bible produce such a different effect from any others of a like kind? There are no hints or suggestions in the Word of God; for He who inspired it is the Author of human nature; and He knows what that nature will bear, and how it may most wisely be addressed. When the Bible speaks of evil, it does so directly and simply, without provoking curiosity, but as a repulsive matter of fact; and viewed in this light the purest mind will not shrink from confronting it.

But even supposing all needful information to have been given, and that in the best form, there will arrive a time when it will not be sufficient, when the mind will work further. And then comes the appeal to principle. We are afraid, perhaps, of awakening a thought of evil in a young girl's mind. We shall not escape the danger by refusing to recognize that there is such a thing as evil. What we may not choose to talk of she will think of, and that often without at all knowing what injury she is doing herself. There are, therefore, certain plain cautions which it is our bounden duty to give. They may, indeed, excite the suspicion of hidden evil; but if they do, it will be only that it may be guarded against, in the spirit of obedience and truth. If, in any case, curiosity should be dangerously aroused, and indulged in consequence, we may be quite sure

that it would have been awakened just the same whether we had given the warning or not.

Some minds, indeed, appear to have a natural morbid craving for everything forbidden, of every kind. They must be dealt with separately. We cannot lay down general laws for them. But no child of ordinary refinement and right feeling will be injured by being told that there are many things which it is very undesirable she should know, and many forms of evil which it is misery and shame to come in contact with, or even to hear of; that to seek for knowledge upon these subjects is a sin, for it is yielding to the temptation which overcame Eve, when she ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It cannot be amiss to say to her, that whatever question she desires, from mere curiosity, to have answered, should be put to some person whom she respects; and that if she shrinks from this, she may be sure it is better to remain in ignorance. Neither can it do her any harm to insist, again and again, upon the *absolute necessity* of listening to the slightest misgiving of conscience with regard to anything unrefined, or unmaidenly, or wanting in delicacy, which when alone, or with others, she is tempted to say or do, at any time, under any circumstances. If this sense of the paramount claim which such instinctive feelings possess can only be fully impressed upon her, it will save her, through God's mercy, from almost all perils. God never leaves us without warning. We must all, in looking back upon our young days, remember things from which we shrank, without knowing why; words which we dared not use, though we could not have explained them. It may be—we may well

thank God if it should be so—that this instinct of ignorance remains with us still. There is no fear now of our acting against it. We know how blessed it is; for it brings back to us somewhat of the freshness and innocence of childhood. Except when duty requires the contrary, we desire nothing better than to have the knowledge of evil kept from us. And we judge the feelings of the young by our own. The things which are hateful and disgusting to us will, we take it for granted, be so to them. There lies our mistake. They have the same instincts, but they have contrary feelings warring against them. Knowledge of any kind, especially that which verges upon the hidden or the forbidden, is a temptation. Excitement of feeling, romance, imagination, can dress up things, in themselves utterly loathsome, till their true nature is entirely concealed. And even where there is very little excitement or romance, Satan can make use of sophistical reasoning, and whisper, that because it is not clear to them why what they desire to do is wrong, therefore it is permissible.

Here, perhaps, is the greatest peril of all, and it is at this point that a premonitory caution would prove such an invaluable safeguard. When we urge upon children, in the very strongest possible manner, the necessity of listening to God's warnings, given them through conscience, we strengthen that warning, we make its voice louder. It may seem to us that our words will have but little effect, yet we must utter them. God guides the young in this way, and so must we. He does not give them a full knowledge

of the evil they are to avoid, because by it their minds would be tainted; but He gives them a check, the sense of a wound or pain, whenever they come within reach of it; and so He bids them draw back. And if we will only work with God, they will draw back. In some happy cases, indeed, they will do so, whether we do our part or not; but this is not the rule of God's government. It is the exception, and we must not reckon upon it. If God gives warning, Satan offers temptations; and God has willed that it shall, for the most part, depend upon education whether the warning or the temptation be the stronger. It is impossible, indeed, for us to begin *too soon* to warn children against the sin of saying or doing what they would be ashamed for their elders to know, because *we can never tell how early evil may be suggested to them.* If, from want of moral courage, we neglect to do this, then the guilt of thoughts, and words, and of deeds, should such be committed, may rest upon our heads as well as theirs. On the other hand, if we only take precaution in time, the necessity for watchfulness will soon cease; and pass but a very few years, and the thoughtless girl of thirteen or fourteen, ready to plunge into any danger, to grapple with any question, so that she may but have the amusement and excitement of gratified curiosity, will have become the modest, self-controlled woman, who, in her dignity and simplicity, shrinks from the unnecessary knowledge of evil as from its contact, and needs no protector but God; no guide but the instincts which He has given her.

One more caution may, perhaps, not unnecessarily

be given. If we desire wise and safe counsel upon these questions to be given to young girls, we must take care that their advisers are women.

To many persons such a caution will appear wholly uncalled for. Nature itself would seem to warn us that there are subjects which a man was never intended to name to a young girl. But experience tells us that this warning of nature is not sufficient. Cases occur in which young girls trust themselves, or are trusted by others, to the direction of men, probably most excellent and pure-minded, and from these causes, as well as from their sacred office, worthy of all respect; but wanting in one most essential qualification for the guidance of a girl—knowledge of a woman's nature. When men have to advise upon these points, they necessarily take for their assistance one of two theories. Either they suppose that a girl's mind is so innocent that she requires scarcely any warning; or, reasoning from their own knowledge of human nature, they imagine that, with certain reservations, they may safely give her the same directions and cautions which they would give to a boy. Now, neither of these theories is strictly true. Girls do require a great deal of warning, but it is in order that evil may be kept from approaching them, not that they may actually see it, and be roused to do battle with it. They will sometimes say and do things which might, under certain circumstances, lead to most fatal consequences; and a man, looking at such words or actions, and knowing how likely the consequences would be to follow in the case of a boy, gives warning and directions with a view to them. The result

is that the young mind is bewildered and disturbed. There is a vague sense of some terrible evil of which nothing is really known. The conscience is burdened, and self-respect is lost. With this there must also be lost the energy and hopefulness which are needed before improvement can be hoped for. A woman dealing with such a case would simply put aside the thought of consequences,—certainly would not suggest their possibility; she would merely insist most strongly upon the necessity of caution on the score of delicacy, refinement, modesty, which are what a girl thoroughly understands; and thus, whilst the evil would be averted, the conscience would be left unburdened, and the brightness and simplicity of the character would remain undisturbed.

It is a very grievous thing to distress a young girl's mind with the fear of sins which may never approach her. She has not yet the moral strength to bear it. Anger may lead to murder, and grown-up people do well to remember it; but to place such a consequence before the eyes of a sensitive girl, and to give her directions as if she was in danger of committing it, would be just sending her forth on the road to a lunatic asylum. It is the same with other sins, God does not teach her to dread them; He only closes up the avenues which may lead to them. When shall we learn to study His ways instead of our own theories?

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE.

But the education of young girls can scarcely be said to end when they have attained to womanhood. They cannot be thrown upon the world like men; and it will, probably, be found, upon inquiry, that the parents who have trusted most confidently to the teaching of nature in the nursery, are often the most rigid in placing restraints upon their children in society. They act as they find it necessary; though, perhaps, if they had only reversed their education, and begun with restraint in the nursery, they would have found that all which was needed in society was advice.

The instinctive delicacy of a girl's mind would then be her own restraint, and we should no longer hear the rumours of the worse than follies of fashionable life, which make those whose paths are marked out for them, in more quiet spheres, shrink from the thought of its temptations and its risks, as from the possible contamination of open vice.

There is indeed a great natural difference in girls as regards simplicity. Some are flirts and coquettes almost from their cradles. Others, though certainly these are exceptions, never really understand what

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flirting and coquetting mean. But, whatever may be the natural character, there can be no doubt that the little incipient flirt, if brought up in an atmosphere of purity and refinement, may be converted into a lively, agreeable, sensible woman; whereas, if her training is the reverse, she may become all that it is most grievous to contemplate. This every one will acknowledge. But what is meant by an atmosphere of purity and refinement? The words sound well, but what do they mean?

They have many meanings. The world translates them into propriety. Propriety is easy of acquirement; purity difficult. And in these days we like royal roads from which all the stones have been removed. So we make our children *proper*.

To speak of love is improper, that is to say it is improper so long as a girl is in the schoolroom. Up to Midsummer or Christmas, in such a year, it is a subject *tabooed* even in thought, because the young lady is not "come out;" but after that time it is quite natural.

So again—novels must on no account be read whilst French, German, and Italian, music and drawing are the occupations of the day; but the moment these sensible pursuits are laid aside, then they are matters of course,—needful for conversation; no one can get on in society without knowing something about them.

Here again, our "wishes are the fathers to our thoughts." The children do not talk of love, therefore they do not think of it!

But what is it that makes us so certain of the fact? It does not appear that God has drawn any such veil

over the subject. On the contrary, children can have lived but a very few years in this world without discovering that there is such a thing as falling in love, and that a very common result of it is marriage. And certainly we shall not prevent their thinking of it, by making any mystery about it; for the love of mystery is innate in all children. Still less shall we keep them from it by shutting them up in the school-room, and not allowing them the society of any but persons of their own sex, for all things which are kept from us are invested with a double interest. Neither is it, perhaps, such a very grievous offence that children should think of love and marriage, and even talk of them. Free ventilation may be the best safeguard against moral as well as physical ills. It may be that a girl who looks at love through a grating may be more excited by the contemplation than one who is allowed to walk abroad, and view it as it really is. At any rate, there is one very essential difference between love looked at through the grating, and love as it actually exists, which it is most desirable should be learnt early; and yet which never will be so learnt unless a certain freedom of observation and discussion is permitted.

Seen through the grating, marriage is the one end and object—the *ultima thule*—of a woman's life. Seen as it really is, it is simply the most important accident of life. It is this distinction which creates the difference between romance and reality.

Romance says, "And so they were married, and lived happily ever after."

Reality says, "And so they were married, and entered upon new duties and new cares."

The child looking through the grating sees nothing but the wedding day. Neither is she told of anything beyond. She sees, indeed, that the sister or the cousin who is married is an angel then, and an ordinary prosaic human being a year or two afterwards: but the illusion is too strong for her youthful imagination. As it is difficult to separate the actor from the person whom he has represented—as Mrs. Siddons must always have retained more or less the form of Lady Macbeth to those who had once seen her personate the character—so the "lovely bride" of the newspapers is still the object of envy and admiration to the child; even when she knows that she has since become a worn, anxious wife and mother—expected to wait upon her husband, instead of being waited upon by him; and occupied in home duties, instead of the excitements of society.

And so marriage becomes the one dream of the secluded child's imagination; or rather, not marriage with its solemn responsibilities, its imperative duties, its great happiness, but also its very serious risks;—but, the white silk dress, and the Brussels veil, the myrtle wreath and orange flowers, the wedding cake and the favours. And of course she believes that the moment she is emancipated from the schoolroom these joys are awaiting her; and as the preliminary to them must be falling in love, therefore every gentleman who approaches her must be viewed in reference to this important end. Will he admire her, or will he not? Does he pay her attentions, or does he neglect her for some one else? The time is come when she ought to be married—when she must be married. How is it that she is not? And so years

go on, and possibly—very possibly, in these days—they fail to bring with them the long looked-for event. Slowly, most unwillingly, the truth forces itself upon her: she is amongst those whose destiny has in some unforeseen way been thwarted.

It was always meant that women should marry, but she is not married. And what is to become of her? What is she to live for? What has life to offer? It had but one prize, and that prize has been missed. What then remains? Nothing.

Now, all this is very sad, very grievous; all the more sad and grievous because it is a sorrow perfectly unnecessary, brought upon the sufferer simply by the false way in which she has been accustomed to look at life.

Women were meant to marry. Marriage is very important. A happy marriage is the most happy of all happy events. But it is not the purpose and object of life, the final cause of woman's creation. It seems almost absurd to suggest the possibility of such an idea, and yet so-called rational human beings talk and act as if it was; and fiction being only the counterpart of the world's facts, recognizes it as such, and thus presents it to the imagination. Girls are so wrongly taught from childhood that they are led to stake their all upon this one cast. No marvel, therefore, that when they lose it, they sink in repining or despair. And the delusion begins in the schoolroom, in the mystery and excitement which the very fact of a forbidden subject creates. Love and marriage as they are, are realities involving risks, responsibilities, duties. Would it injure a child's mind to hear them spoken of as such, and to be allowed freely to

express her thoughts, her hopes, and anticipations? The real mischief of all such conversation lies in the gossiping secrecy which usually accompanies it. When girls chatter among themselves in their bedrooms, they do themselves untold harm. When they talk openly in the drawing-room, to persons they respect, they are safe. If these subjects interest them, and naturally and rightly they do interest them extremely, they ought to be allowed to say so. Their ideas may be very foolish, their anticipations greatly exaggerated, but so long as they can be expressed plainly and simply, they themselves will be simple-minded. And it is only in this way that the true view of life can be put before them,—that which faces the fact that very possibly they never may marry; and that if they do not,—instead of being condemned to a life of desolate repining,—they will have to undertake another set of duties, to throw themselves into a different sphere of interests, tending, even as the duties of married life, to the training of the immortal spirit for Heaven, and its preparation for the full enjoyment of that Love which embraces all other love, and in which is to be found the perfection of happiness for which their young hearts are thirsting.

It sounds like an ideal—an imagination. It is so wholly unlike the world's theory, as regards the vocation of women. And facts and experience, it may be said, are against it. From the beginning of time women have always set marriage before them as the highest joy, the completion of their being. To the end of time they will continue to do so. What is the use of bringing before them the dreams of hermits, and mystics, which not one in a hundred will

ever be able to understand, and which if understood might unfit them for the duties they are called upon to fulfil?

Simply, because if this view of life, which makes marriage an accident instead of an end, is not true, then, with all reverence be it said, God has created a vast number of immortal beings without a purpose. He has given them feelings, affections, aspirations, power, of enjoyment, but there is no object to satisfy these cravings. If the inhabitants of the earth could at this moment be paired, and each man could take his wife, there would still be a surplus of women. What were they made for? Why are they sentient suffering beings? Far better were it to be stocks and stones, or even as the beasts that perish. Created for an object which is unattainable. Created merely to live, and breathe—to eat and drink—to joy and grieve—to dream of a happiness which is never to be theirs—and then to die!

The very thought is blasphemy. The great Creator of the universe, the Author of all good, has not thus erred in His foresight. He has not thus failed in His calculations. If even a sparrow falls not to the ground without His permission, if there is a purpose in the creation of the tiniest insect that breathes out its life in an hour, then there must be an end and object for the creation of those many women, who, whether shut up in cloisters, or free to find their homes in the world at large, pass the term of their earthly probation without having met with a heart which shall answer to theirs; or who, having met with it, have not been able to enjoy the happiness of married life.

And that end and object must lie beyond the grave. There is "one event which happeneth alike to all," and when we wake up after it, it will be to find ourselves in a world where there is "neither marrying, nor giving in marriage." The destiny which awaits us *there*, is the destiny for which we are created, for which we are now preparing; a destiny independent of earthly happiness, untouched by the accident of marriage. And when a woman looks forward to this, when she makes this her object, the home for her thoughts, and the dream of her aspirations, her needs are satisfied. God has given her the knowledge of reality;—the one awful, immutable, eternal, ever-blessed reality—life in His presence—in the consciousness of His love; and she is content to leave the "changes and chances" of this mortal existence in His hands; satisfied that, whether married or unmarried, whether in the enjoyment of the highest human love, or of that which is only secondary, she will equally find the pathway to Him in whom alone is rest.

And then she is simple-minded.

It is a great grace—simplicity. The most worldly admire it, the most ardent followers of fashion strive after it; but none but the simple in heart attain it.

Simplicity is singleness, oneness of purpose and desire. That which mars simplicity is the fact of having two objects. If a woman, a young girl—for it is of such we are now speaking—desires but one thing, to fit herself, through God's grace, for Heaven, her whole life becomes simplified. Everything that happens is viewed with reference to this end, and judged accordingly. It may be love, it may be

marriage, it may be a life without either; but in any case she has no wish except to place herself in God's Hands, to see His Will, and do it now, as she hopes one day to do it in Heaven. And with this simplicity of heart must naturally come simplicity of manner. Manner is only the mould into which the inner being casts itself. Quiet ease, freedom from affectation, absence of restraint in conversation, the natural expression of thoughts which are really thought—all so rare, but so indescribably winning to us when we see them united with the freshness and beauty of youth, are the natural result of a simple mind; a mind which has but one object. We sometimes perceive in persons both young and old, who are pleasing, graceful, courteous, and perhaps really amiable, and in a measure religious, the presence of something, not exactly put on, not exactly unreal—but which gives the impression of unreality; and which repels us. We are apt to call it worldliness; and perhaps we are right; but we might better grasp what we mean, if we called it two-mindedness. It is distinct from double-mindedness, for it is not the blending of two objects in one, but the endeavour to hold both together, to serve God and mammon. Such persons are never simple, and it is the want of simplicity which jars upon us.

It is quite true, indeed, that persons may be simple without being necessarily religious. Devotion to any one occupation or study, to the exclusion of all others, will tend to render the manners simple; but it will be an eccentric—probably, an uncourteous, awkward, simplicity,—certainly not such as would be pleasing in the young. And the simplicity of

which we are now especially speaking is that which regards a young girl's manners in society, and especially in her intercourse with men. Let her have two objects in view—one to do her duty to God, and be happy in Heaven; and the other to get married, and be happy on earth; and she will be in a perpetual state of effort to harmonize the two. She will be full of fears, and proprieties, and perplexities, thinking whether this is allowable, or that will be noticed; whether she has talked too loud, or too fast; whether she has been agreeable or dull; whether she has expressed herself correctly or incorrectly. It may be all very sincere and real; but it will not be in the least simple, and, as a natural consequence, it will be far from pleasing. But let her sole object be to accept life as it is given her by God, and use it in the best way she can for His glory, and all this anxiety about propriety and effect will be at an end. Her womanly instinct will tell her what she may or what she may not do; there will be no self-consciousness, or self-retrospection; and if she should by any accident transgress the precise limits which society has fixed for a young girl's behaviour, the mistake will be one which the most severe critic will hesitate to criticise. For there is a charm in *real* simplicity which it is quite impossible to withstand. We find it, in fact, so universally admitted, that every species of vanity and worldliness will endeavour to take its form, in order to render itself more attractive. The simple young lady in novels can never see or understand when a man is falling in love with her, though she draws him on by saying and doing things which would be absolutely impossible for true simplicity;

since *that* never loses its common sense or its keenness of feminine instinct. So, again, the fast young lady in real life apes simplicity when she sets aside the restraints of society, and dresses, talks, and acts just as vanity or the spirit of bravado may suggest. But no one who has the slightest insight into character can really be deceived by any of these counterfeits. True simplicity is something so pure, so beautiful, so unearthly, that when once seen, nothing else can ever be mistaken for it. There is that in it which is *felt*, which cannot but be felt. It is, through God's blessing upon it, its own safeguard, and vice dares not approach it.

Persons sometimes ask, Is simplicity a gift? If not born with us, is it possible to attain it? It is, indeed, a gift, inasmuch as all good things come from God; but it is not a gift in the same sense as beauty or talent. If we will only live to God solely and heartily, it may become ours; for when we do thus live, the question what is to be our lot during the period of our probation becomes so secondary, that it ceases to disturb the mind, except when the question of some present interest is brought before it.

Again, all this will doubtless be thought imaginative, but facts do not become imagination because it is the custom to call them so. There is one touchstone which we may apply without difficulty to this, as to every other question that has respect to our earthly condition, and which we desire to see in its true light—the thought of death.

If marriage is the one object which the world makes it, then what becomes of that object at death?

It is essential for English girls, perhaps, above all

others, to be taught to view this matter rightly. Common observation teaches us that the number of these who remain unmarried is increasing. It is useless here to pause and inquire why this should be; we are only called upon to accept the fact. The young girls whom we cherish and educate with such care and tenderness may very possibly, even very probably, not marry. It will be both wise and kind in us to prepare them for such a possibility, and to teach them to be happy and useful under it. And this can only be done by the tone of our conversation respecting life in general,—taking in love and marriage as its most important accidents.

Free sensible conversation of a general character does much more than lectures and advice in training a young mind. We may preach, with the wisdom of a philosopher and the earnestness of a saint, against the folly of thinking and dreaming of love; and the children will listen to us with ill-concealed impatience, and run back to their story books, and their fairy tales, and revel in visions of handsome young princes and beautiful princesses; act over again in their own minds all the scenes of romance and excitement; and count the days till they themselves are to be emancipated, and permitted to share in similar delights. Nature is much too strong to be controlled by lectures and advice. As a general rule, men and women were intended to marry, and therefore young people will always think about it. But truth, observation, experience, act as a counterpoise to the promptings of nature. If children are accustomed early to hear life spoken of as it really is, they will by degrees learn to look at it in a true

way. Marriage, in fiction, is the end; in truth, it is the beginning of what may be called a woman's career. An unmarried life is, in fiction, a lot of sober sadness and regret, with no object and few duties, and which nothing but the spirit of resignation can make endurable. An unmarried life, in truth, may be (if people choose to make it so) a life of great usefulness, great interest, bringing to the mind a pleasant sense of independence and freedom, blessed with much inward peace, the very brightest hope, and the possession of a Love, the faintest breath of which is enough to make this troubled earth a paradise.

Still, girls will dream of love; and if their dreams are realized, their lives will indeed be blest. But to look upon marriage as so essential, that it is needful to rush into it, in order to avoid the supposed dreariness of a single life, is a mistake as fatal to goodness as it is to happiness.

What, however, will tend more than anything else to counteract fiction, and to give a young girl a right view of the proportion which marriage really bears to the other events of life, is to bring her early into contact with men of a superior stamp, a good deal older than herself, who will take no notice of her, and only allow her to listen to their conversation. Elder brothers are a very great assistance in this matter. Doubtless, they will be likely to flirt and fall in love—probably they may marry; but matrimony is not the exclusive subject of their thoughts, as it too often is in the case of girls. Professional affairs, politics, local interests, all share, and, at times, engross their attention. Love is a good deal to them, but it is by no means everything. And not only

brothers, but all men who have good sense, and pursuits or professions which interest them, will teach the same lesson. A girl who is thrown into the society of men at an early age, is much less likely to grow romantic and sentimental than one who is shut up in the schoolroom. She sees what it is which really occupies their thoughts; she learns to discriminate their characters; she perceives their faults, and hears their dispositions discussed, and so is the less likely to be led away by an ideal. Nothing is more dangerous than to bring up a young girl in perfect retirement, and then to throw her constantly into the society of any one man. Let him be who or what he may, she is nearly certain, in time, to make a romance about him. "Propinquity"—as Miss Edgeworth says in her novel of "The Absentee"—"Propinquity"—that is the danger. Throw people together exclusively, and they must fall in love. It may be a case of Beauty and the Beast, but the Beast is sure to gain the victory. But bring a girl of fifteen or sixteen into the society of a number of gentlemen, and she is so occupied and amused in thinking about them all, that she has not leisure to fix her thoughts exclusively upon any one. And seeing them together, she will judge of them truly. They will talk to each other as they would not talk if separated and thrown singly into the society of women. When men meet one another, the pretty nothings which turn a young girl's head are, for the most part, forgotten. They become interested in other things. They prefer business to play, and the young lady is put in the background. It is rather an unpleasant experience for youthful vanity, but it is a very useful one; and

if it can be given early, it will not really be mortifying. At fifteen it is natural to be overlooked; and when a young girl has learnt that half the gentlemen she sees think nothing about her, and of the other half not above one in fifty is likely to fall in love with her, she moves about amongst them with a simple ease and freedom from vanity and affectation, which saves her from unnumbered vexations, and is in itself a grace that no effort could acquire.

Where there is great beauty, this ease and simplicity no doubt become more difficult of attainment, because beauty is in itself so attractive that even grave politicians and philosophers are more or less fascinated with it. But great beauty is very rare. The vainest persons are those who have only a moderate share, and have set their hearts upon making the most of it. A little wholesome neglect is for them most beneficial. Where there is real beauty—beauty which cannot be questioned—it is perhaps better, as has previously been said, to acknowledge the fact, just as riches or talent may be acknowledged, and then estimate the gift at its real value. After all, what a woman really cares for, if she is worth anything, is genuine affection for herself. As she loathes the man who worships her for her riches, and grows weary of him who cares only for her talent; so she despises him who is the slave of her beauty. There may be an intoxicating excitement in the first adulation of the world, but it is very transient, and the heart sickens when it is over, and in the dreariness of reaction a most salutary lesson is learnt. Regular beauty is in fact by no means so great a snare as that insensible fascination, which in some cases is

exercised over all persons; and which makes its possessor the flattered pet of her friends and companions, as well as the idol of society.

But all this endeavour to keep girls simple, and to make them take a true view of life, its happiness, and its temptations, must, it may be thought, be neutralized by the teaching they receive from books. It is under this idea that novels are in general carefully excluded from the schoolroom; and the exclusion is, up to a certain point, very desirable. But to suppose that a tale of love will do more harm at thirteen or fourteen than it does at eighteen, appears upon examination to be a mistake.

In what does the harm of novels consist?

First—above all, in the untrue view which they afford of life, giving it but one object, one prize, and staking the whole of a woman's happiness upon this.

That is a harm which is certainly likely to be felt more at the age of eighteen than at thirteen, for the immediate interests of a girl of thirteen lie before her, in the schoolroom, amongst her young companions. She gazes into the future, as men and women gaze into Eternity; and lives for it, even as men and women live for Eternity; owning its existence, dreaming of it, thinking themselves influenced by it, and then turning away to seize upon some passing joy, and find an absorbing interest in hopes which wither as they are grasped.

But, secondly, the harm of novels is to be found in the excitement of the imagination; so that not only life as a whole is viewed untruly, but the present position and circumstances of the reader are, in her own eyes, idealized. She becomes

her own heroine, acts her own scenes, in her own home; converts the persons about her into characters of romance; and by so doing blinds herself to the real world, its homely duties, and demands for self-sacrifice and self-restraint. But here, again, the danger is greater for eighteen than for thirteen. The child of thirteen has lessons and regular work to do; she is compelled to attend to them, and there is nothing in French and German exercises to encourage day-dreams. But the young lady of eighteen is emancipated from all this routine; her time is at her own disposal, and everything about her tends to foster instead of to check her imagination. There are persons standing near ready to be invested with imaginary charms. There are incidents daily occurring, which may be the germs of the event which is to change the current of her life. The child of thirteen knows that to fall in love is an absurdity; the young lady of eighteen thinks that it is her special privilege—almost her duty. And if novels have been kept from her up to this precise moment; and then, emancipated from the schoolroom, she is allowed to enjoy them for the first time, at the very season when she is able to convert them into realities; can we wonder if the excitement should be too great for her good sense, and she should plunge into a course of novel reading, throw up every attempt at continuing her studies, and so lose, in vanity and nothingness, the most valuable portion of her life?

The question is not whether novels are, in themselves, desirable for the mind. We cannot exclude them from the literature of the day; and if we could

do so we should effect no good; for imagination is a faculty bestowed upon us by God, and it requires to be fed, just as much as any other faculty. Novels are not what they ought to be; but so, no literature, be it poetry, history, philosophy, or science, is, in all things, what it ought to be. We must, in this world, accept that which is given us, and make the best choice we can from it. Novels will be written, and they will be read. The point for us to decide is, at what age, and under what limitations, such reading shall be permitted.

Now, it will probably startle many persons to hear it said that a girl of twelve or thirteen may not only with comparative safety read a novel judiciously chosen; but, further, that novels, generally, will do less harm than they otherwise would, if the mind is accustomed to them early.

The assertion is made with hesitation, and is to be received with much caution. But the previous observations may, it is hoped, have tended to show what is meant. A child reads a novel as she reads a fairy tale. The world described is an unreality, so are the persons described in it. They all live in imagination. They are not brought down to inhabit her own earth; and it is only when they are thus transplanted that they can really affect her moral nature. And when she has once become accustomed to the excitement of fiction, that excitement lessens. The interest, in a measure palls, and instead of looking forward to being permitted to read novels as the greatest delight in store for her, she begins to feel that there may be a pleasure higher and more lasting in truth. If this conviction can be attained before

the age when the imagination is likely to be excited by society and the temptations of the world, it is certainly a great gain.

On the other hand, there is, no doubt, a serious risk. If novels are allowed too early, the taste may be so vitiated that there may be no appetite for any food less stimulating. This is the reason why such books are looked upon with suspicion.

But the exaggeration of a truth does not neutralize the truth itself. The danger here alluded to will be found to attend *all* works of fiction. If read constantly, to the exclusion of every other kind of literature, they will all equally vitiate the taste. But it is not the admission of the element of love which does the mischief. There is a fashion in all these matters. People adopt certain codes of laws,—without taking the trouble to inquire why,—merely because others adopt them. It is supposed that a book which treats of young people may be safely read by young people, though there may be precisely the same ingredients in it as those written expressly for their elders. A book which describes little girls and boys as flirting is still a "young book," and therefore, admitted into the schoolroom; but a book which describes the devotion of the heart, belonging to more advanced years, is not safe, and must be excluded. So again, half the children in England would be permitted to read such books as "The Wide, Wide World," and "Queechy," in which fascinatingly simple little girls of ten or twelve are petted and caressed by respectable gentlemen of five-and-twenty or thirty, who afterwards take the form of lovers, and marry them. No one calls these books

novels, and yet they are novels, just as strictly as the most exciting love story to be procured from a circulating library. And what is more, they are much more likely to do injury to a child's mind. To suggest to a little girl that the kind friend who is petting her, perhaps for her parents' sake, may some day turn out a hero of romance, and ask her to be his wife, is certainly more injurious to her simplicity than to put before her a picture of what may occur at some far-off day between herself and an individual absolutely unknown. And in like manner, to interrupt the unconscious freedom of intercourse between young boys and girls of fifteen and sixteen by thoughts of incipient rivalry and jealousy, has a much worse effect upon their minds than to let them know that such temptations may meet them in after years:—to say nothing of the untruthfulness of these representations, since, as a general rule, girls of sixteen cordially dislike boys of their own age; and boys of sixteen, if they have any hearts to lose, part with them to women of five-and-twenty.

It cannot then, strictly speaking, be the introduction of love into works of fiction, which we dread, for, if so, we must weed our schoolroom libraries of half their favourite authors. Neither can it be fiction altogether; for then we must deny the existence of the imaginative faculty, and the duty of providing food for it. The fact, perhaps, is, that we really do not know what we dread, or why we dread it. We have bought our opinions ready made, and they serve our purpose, we think, just as well as if we had formed them for ourselves. But there is a curious tendency in society to work itself out

of these ready-made opinions; or, at least, to test them, and throw aside those which are really valueless. It may be seen, with regard to the present subject, in the common exception to the ban placed upon novels, in the case of Sir Walter Scott's writings. Almost all children are allowed to read the Waverley novels, and it may perhaps safely be asserted that no child was ever the worse for that reading.

Why is this? They are highly imaginative, intensely exciting, not always refined is the language put into the mouths of the different characters, and the plot of the story always turns upon love. Nearly all the objections brought against novels in general, might, in fact, be brought against Sir Walter Scott's. Nearly all—but not all. There is one great exception. They are true—true to nature. They represent life as it is, or as it has been, or may be. They place the interest of life in those things which really do form its interest; love being one ingredient, a very important one, but by no means to the exclusion of others. What is commonly said of Sir Walter Scott, that he always makes his heroes and heroines secondary, constitutes in fact the great charm of his books, because, in it, is to be found their truth. And it is this element of truth which renders them safe; it is this which we feel unconsciously; and, as a general rule, it may be said that any book in which the same element is found, may, without hesitation, be placed in the hands of a child, whether the plot of the story turns upon the little excitements of the schoolroom, or the great excitements of love and marriage.

For where there is such a love of truth, such a

perception of it, there will also be a nobleness and purity in the mind of the author, which must tell upon that of his readers. Vice is only alluring when seen through a veil. . No one who desires to look at it, as it is, can make it attractive in description. Whatever Sir Walter Scott touches, into whatever scenes he introduces his readers, the purity of the author's mind is felt throughout. It is with him, as with Shakespeare, the expressions which may be found fault with are merely characteristic words—not vehicles for the writer's thoughts and feelings; and it is these alone which have an influence for evil.

But Sir Walter Scott's tales are not the only books of the kind which may be used with the view of accustoming children's minds to novels, without injuring their taste, or corrupting their principles. Historical stories, as a rule, are safer than others, because the interest is divided between love, and stirring events which have really taken place. But even amongst regular novels, there are some,—such for instance as Mrs. Gaskell's "North and South," or "Sylvia's Lovers,"—which will be found to be equally innocuous. In the former, the interest of the love is entirely subservient to the development of character, and to the marked peculiarities of the people of the manufacturing districts; and in the other, it is carried on beyond marriage, and shown in its effects upon the whole course of life. The mind and taste of a girl of thirteen will be raised to a higher standard by reading books of this stamp, when she does read fiction, than by spending her time upon the first efforts at composition of girls but a few years older than herself, although the

incidents they relate may be of the most perfectly harmless description. And when the mind has once learnt to appreciate a good novel, it will turn with dislike from anything that is bad; not merely bad in the sense of being wrong, but bad in style and taste; and this is a great safeguard. So few novels are really worth anything, that if a correct and pure taste has been early formed, it will be impossible for the mind, when left to its own choice, to find its whole satisfaction in the contents of a circulating library.

But perhaps the greatest of all checks to the dangers of exciting fiction will be found in reading it aloud. An inferior novel will not bear this test; but to read a good novel—"Ivanhoe," or "Kenilworth," for instance—to a party of children is delightful. And there is no danger, then, of their becoming engrossed by it to the exclusion of study; or being tempted to deceit in the enjoyment of a forbidden pleasure. And, after all, these are some of the greatest evils which an early acquaintance with novels is likely to bring with it. Everything done or said against the warnings of conscience (supposing, of course, that conscience is not morbid) becomes a sin, though in itself the act or the word may be innocent. As St. Paul tells us, "he that doubteth is condemned, ... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." [1]

A story read aloud is also a test of the characters of those who listen to it. More insight into children's dispositions may be gained in seasons of recreation, by the knowledge of their favourite heroes and

[1] Rom. xiv. 23.

heroines, and the criticisms passed upon their conduct, than by the most careful observation made during the hours of study. And it is, besides—and this is very important—a bond of sympathy between the reader and the listeners. There are comparatively few pleasures in which the old and young can fully sympathize; and it is most important, therefore, to seize upon the enjoyment of reading, and to connect with it all that pleasant interchange of thought, and unity of feeling, which tends so strongly to bind human hearts together.

Reading aloud has another advantage. It gives the power of weeding the book of passages which are objectionable—a process of some difficulty, but which requires no concealment. Children are quite prepared for it, and if they have the slightest sense of honour, they will never look into a book afterwards to see what has been omitted—so long, that is, as they are plainly told that, as a general rule, there will be omissions. It is only what they suspect that they are tempted to search into. There are many portions of Dickens's works which may be read in this way, and, indeed, this is probably the best opportunity for becoming acquainted with them. At the rate at which the literature of the present day is proceeding, no writer of fiction can expect his works to be universally read for more than four or five years. At the expiration of that period his first productions will be considered in a measure obsolete.

But even if good novels cannot be read aloud, they should always be read openly, and discussed freely. There may be portions, as in the case of the Waverley novels, which it may be necessary to omit when read-

ing aloud; but children, in reading to themselves, are so carried on by the interest of the tale that they do not pause to dwell upon particular passages; and even incidents which we should dislike to bring before them ourselves, will be passed over with only a half-comprehension; and if there is no mystery made about them in conversation, they will cease to dwell upon their minds.

Mystery, hints, whispers—those are the things which mar a child's simplicity; for mystery implies that what is attempted to be hidden is, in fact, partially revealed; and when a part is seen, the wish to discover the whole is awakened. Whatever is read through, or spoken of without hesitation, does comparatively little mischief; and if, in reading aloud, awkward passages are stumbled upon unexpectedly, it is far better to go through them boldly, than to show the least aversion to them.

What has now been said is, of course, open to much misconstruction. It may be interpreted to mean that novels are recommended as desirable in general for children of thirteen and fourteen; that they need not necessarily be unobjectionable; and that it is better to treat the evil contained in them boldly, than to attempt to shun it. These assertions would possess a fair semblance of truth, and, as a general rule, it is a vain and hopeless task to attempt to guard against misconstruction. The most carefully guarded expressions—the most exact words—will not save writers from it; and it is wise, therefore, to be indifferent to it, or at least to accept it as part of life's discipline. But the present subject is one of such importance, that, at the risk of tediousness, it may be

well to repeat more clearly, and condense into few words, the opinion which has really here been expressed.

Novels are *not* recommended as general reading for very young persons; but it is thought that a good novel—good in style and pure in principle, and in which the interest is not wholly concentrated on love—may *occasionally* be read aloud to children quite safely, and with advantage, as accustoming them to a class of books which would be injuriously exciting if they were first given to them at the period of their introduction to the amusements and freedom of after-life. It is also thought that children may safely be allowed, from time to time, to read novels of this superior kind to themselves, so long as they are encouraged to talk about them freely.

It is a short conclusion, arrived at after many words. But the theory and the practice of education are upon these points so greatly at variance, that it has been necessary to enter fully into the subject, in order to see how the difference has arisen; and, if possible, to discover its cause, and the mode by which such theory and practice may be made to agree. Parents and governesses inveigh against novels, and yet children read them: and in this there is a great evil; much greater to both parties than would naturally result from the actual fact. If we believe that we are doing an injury to children by allowing them to read a novel, then, at whatever cost, we are bound to forbid the enjoyment. We can never justify ourselves to our consciences, or to God, by saying that "we do not know how to prevent it; it is a kind of fashion, and the children would be dissatisfied if

they were forbidden to do what their companions do."

There is in this case, as in so many others, a difficulty. We slur it over, and think that by so doing we have escaped it. But there is no way of escaping a difficulty except by facing it. If, in doing so, we are compelled to give up part or a whole of some favourite and generally received theory, we shall still be wiser, happier, and better, than by admitting it, in order to agree in words with the serious, thinking portion of our fellow-creatures; and acting against it, in order to make ourselves friends with those who laugh all such caution to scorn. It will be well for us, then, to ponder the question carefully, to make our rules with reference to the characters of the children whom we have in charge, and to keep to them; especially bearing in mind that the selection of books is most important, and that it is essential to accustom children early to restrictions with regard to them; whilst, in reference to one style of literature—if it may be dignified by the name—*newspapers*, we are only safe by actually forbidding them. Extracts may be read aloud often very usefully; but if the paper itself is put into a girl's hands, she is almost certain to stumble upon scenes and facts which taint the purity of the mind, and excite a morbid and evil curiosity.

And now, it may be thought, having considered the preliminaries—the stepping stones—which lead to that point at which a young girl may be likely to be thrown into general society—to fall in love, and to marry,—it may be thought that the next subject would naturally be the circumstances and conditions

under which an engagement may be formed. But the idea of offering an opinion upon such a subject as this is really absurd. The course of a comet may be predicted; but the course of love can no more be foreseen, than its cause can be assigned. If we are true, disinterested, and bent upon seeking God's will, we shall act rightly in these matters; and if we are not, no counsel will be of any use to us. And if children have been brought up in habits of purity, simplicity, candour, obedience, and reverence for all that is good and noble, they will, as women, judge better for themselves, in all questions in which their affections are concerned, than any one can judge for them.

We may lay down the wisest, or apparently the wisest, laws for ourselves, making the strongest resolutions against some particular course of action which seems to us undesirable; but we shall almost certainly find that sooner or later we are compelled to adopt it. It seems to be God's constant lesson to us, not to attempt to be our own Providence, or take the direction of our own lives, or the lives of others, into our own hands; but simply to accept it, as it is marked out by Him, and to do with it that which is most in accordance with His law.

In France, parents arrange marriages for their children themselves. We cry out against the custom, for we suppose that a *mariage de convenance* can never be a *mariage d'amour*. This, however, does not seem to be a necessary, though it may be a frequent sequence; and if the results of the system appear to us unsatisfactory, yet the system itself has at least this advantage, that it is a perfectly open

and acknowledged mode of proceeding. The most honourable and conscientious persons adopt it.

In England, the same thing is often done surreptitiously, under false pretences, because it is supposed that marriage ought always to be a question of free choice; and the effect is degradation of character and principle to all concerned in it. Here, again, we have a theory of one kind and a practice of another, and in consequence deceit and unreality. Upon the natural theory—that theory which supposes that children in a nursery are angels of modesty, that little girls are models of simplicity, and young ladies perfect in refinement and delicacy,—it is also presumed that no heart is ever won unsought; and that no young girl ever thinks that an offer is going to be made her until it is made. This is the easiest theory possible; it leaves everything to take its course without any anxiety, any forethought. Parents have nothing to do but to enjoy their children's society as long as they can, to invite to their house whomsoever they like, to let young people be together just as circumstances may point out. Everything is certain to go right. A well brought up English girl can never oppose her parents' wishes. If an offer should be made her by some one considered ineligible, it will be sufficient to say that he is not approved, and she will of course reject him. She cannot love him,—for upon the natural theory that is not proper!

And so it is that hearts are sacrificed,—that the happiness of life is wrecked.

French parents expect their daughter to marry a man whom, perhaps, she does not actually love, but

whose character, circumstances, and position are, they believe, likely eventually to ensure her happiness. English parents throw their child into daily association with a man who, from poverty, or ill-health, or from other causes, cannot give her the prospect of a happy home; and then, when she has become attached to him, and an offer of marriage is made, turn round and express their extreme surprise, possibly their indignation, and pronounce the sentence of separation for ever.

Surely a theory, which produces such results as these, must be wrong! It may be—it is—utterly odious to plan and manœuvre for a wealthy marriage, or one of rank, or, in fact, for any marriage at all; but to say that we are therefore at liberty to risk a young girl's happiness, by never taking thought about marriage, is far worse than foolish—it is cruel.

If she is penniless, and we dread her marrying a poor man, we are bound not to encourage the visits and the attentions of those that are poor. If we know the secret history of any individual, and feel sure that his character is objectionable, we are bound to keep him at a distance. If we see symptoms of an incipient attachment, we are bound at once to make inquiries, and to assure ourselves that should it come to a question of an offer of marriage, there would be no reason to withhold our consent.

These precautions are simply the dictates of kindness and common sense. We may stop affection in the germ, and do no harm; but in attempting to destroy it, when it has once taken root in the heart, we risk the destruction of the hopes of a life.

But if, negatively, we may so far interfere in ques-

tions of marriage; positively, we must not. French customs in these matters are sometimes adduced as in a measure sanctioning, or at least affording a parallel to the manœuvring of fashionable mothers in England; but no one who has ever known what the arrangements for a good French marriage really are, would ever think of making such a comparison. It is one thing for parents and friends to consult together beforehand, and, with the gentleman's consent, to agree to give the parties concerned an opportunity for knowing each other, and becoming really attached, which is the French custom; and quite another to act without any such arrangement, and merely from worldly ambition, to throw a young girl into a position in which, it is true, she may attract the person it is wished she should marry, but, on the other hand, in which she very probably may not. The one is a *bonâ fide*, open agreement, in which the wishes of the parties principally concerned are consulted; the other is a mean, degrading speculation, involving the almost certain loss of happiness—and on the lady's side, the violation of every feeling of dignity and self-respect.

And even where there is no personal interest concerned, to meddle in questions of marriage by bringing persons together, and striving to give them favourable impressions of each other, is a most dangerous playing with edged tools.

Supposing that by our efforts we can on one side awaken affection, yet there is the risk that obstacles to marriage may be interposed; and then the misery which will follow must be laid at our door. Marriages, the proverb says, are made in Heaven. People smile, and ask, whether this can be so, since so many

are unhappy? But that an event is ordered by God, which is the graver meaning of the saying, does not necessarily imply that it is made for present happiness.

The events of life, among which marriage holds the foremost place, are not only sources of joy, but also of probation and discipline. And when a young girl marries, God takes her education out of our hands, and places it in those of another. To Him we must leave the choice who that other shall be. We have but a negative voice allowed us; and even that only up to a certain point.

If we allow foolish intimacies which end in a foolish marriage, we are answerable for the misery of that marriage, because we could have foreseen, and ought to have prevented it. If, on the other hand, we try to bring about a marriage, we are equally answerable for its results; or for the unhappiness which disappointment may cause.

All we can do is to give young girls a high standard for their judgment of men; to introduce them, as early as possible, into the society of those who are really superior; to guard them from constant intercourse with any whom we know it would be unwise or impossible for them to marry;—and then to leave the event to God.

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDSHIP.

But suppose a young girl does not marry; suppose—which is by no means so rare a case as some persons imagine—that she does not make marriage her ideal of happiness; that she is contented with a happy home, and useful occupations, and is not always dreaming of her wedding day, or thinking that every gentleman who speaks to her is going to fall in love with her; is she, therefore, likely to escape the sorrows, trials, and disappointments connected with the exercise of the affections? Is friendship perfectly safe, whilst love is proverbially unsafe? The home history of half the families in England would probably compel an answer in the negative.

Who has not known more or less of the evils of an exaggerated or unwise friendship? evils which crept on so stealthily, the germs of which were so slight, that it might have seemed almost impossible to discover or check them. Jealousies, suspicions, unwarrantable influence, neglect of home duties, perhaps ultimate estrangement from home relations—all to be traced to some unfortunate friendship!

And looking at these things, mothers dread their children's friendships with cause; and yet, if

young people have no friendships and do not marry, their lives will be desolate.

It is the mother's dream that she is to be sufficient for her children's happiness. She forgets that they are not sufficient for hers. What we all need is companionship of our own age, whatever that age may be. The child, living amongst grown-up persons, pines for the society of children; the parent or the governess, living amongst children, pines for the comprehension and sympathy of those of her own standing. And therefore the mother's dream, based upon an expectation contrary to nature, is constantly doomed to disappointment; and, what is far more important, it acts, as all unfounded expectations must act, injuriously upon both the parties concerned. It makes the mother unreasonable and exacting, and the child ungrateful and irritable.

When a mother parts with her daughter in marriage, she is, to a certain degree, prepared for and resigned to the knowledge that she must thenceforth hold but a secondary place in her affections. It is the law of nature, and she receives somewhat of an equivalent for the sacrifice she makes, in the sense of having secured a safe position and protection for her child for life. But when she awakens to the fact that, without any such claim from nature, and without having any such equivalent, her daughter's affections are withdrawn from her, and that the confidence and sympathy, which have hitherto been hers, are bestowed upon some female friend, perhaps a recent acquaintance, perhaps personally distasteful, there does arise a very strong sense of ingratitude,—a very strong inclination to look at the friendship in the

worst light, and at once to interfere and put a stop to it. She may try to conceal the feeling, but it will show itself; and the moment it is discovered, the daughter becomes restrained in manner, probably in words; the mother is more annoyed, and shows her annoyance; the daughter resents the irritation, and is irritable herself; and so, by mutual reaction, the breach widens, until it can never be healed. If the daughter gives up her friend, in her secret heart she accuses the mother of having made her wretched; and if she does not give her up, the jars, and jealousies, and suspicions which are engendered, make life a torment.

Now, all this might often be avoided, if mothers would only, at the very outset, recognize the fact, which must sooner or later be forced upon them, that there is a period in the lives of all young people when their strongest affections will have a tendency to centre themselves on some one out of the family circle.

The romance of almost every young girl's nature is first drawn forth by some companion or friend; and in these cases a little play of excitement and sorrow, jealousy and exactingness, often goes on, which is, for the time being, as absorbing to the parties concerned, and as provoking to the bystanders, as any of the true lovers' quarrels, which are commonly accepted as only making love more precious.

Some girls, who have no great depth of character, have a succession of these romances: others are true to one. But there are many of a graver character, who expend their feelings upon some persons older than themselves, whom they invest with all imaginary virtues, and from whom they seek advice upon subjects

—especially those connected with religion—which they have never had the courage to mention to any one else. This latter phase of romantic friendship is often more trying to a mother than any other, because it trenches especially upon her own peculiar province. She considers herself, and very naturally, her child's best adviser; and it is extremely hard to see her counsel set aside for that of a new friend, or followed only in compliance with this friend's request. There is nothing to be said about all this, except that it is human nature; and as we cannot alter nature, we shall do wisely in adapting ourselves to it.

The love of relations is one form of natural affection, the love of friends another. The Bible recognizes both, and puts each in its true place, so that they may not interfere with one another. The tie of choice is the more exciting: the love of Jonathan for David "was wonderful, passing the love of women;"[1] but the tie of nature is the more enduring. Joseph's love for Benjamin survived long years of separation and exile. To say that a brother or a sister is a friend, is to state what is considered a thing of course. To say that a friend is as a brother or a sister, is to describe friendship of the most lasting character. When our Blessed Redeemer called His disciples His friends, He exalted them to the dignity and the privilege of angels. When He said, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father,"[2] He raised them above angels, for He acknowledged them as partakers of His own Nature.

That the ties of relationship are very frequently

[1] 2 Sam. i. 26. [2] St. John xx. 17.

severed, and that when severed they are more difficult to reunite than any others, does not, in the least, militate against their being intended by nature to be the strongest of all. The tendency of nature is never to be judged by its failures; and the very fact that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city,"[1] shows how strong must have been that original principle of union which, when once lost, it is so almost impossible to restore. And, if we would only have faith in the strength of these natural ties, these bonds which God Himself has formed, we should be less suspicious of those which seem the result of choice. Being less suspicious, we should be more sympathizing, and with the presence of sympathy in relations, a large portion of the dangers of friendship would be avoided.

Jealousy is the very cankerworm of love in every form, and no mother need be jealous of her child's love, if she will only act wisely. When a daughter can go to her mother, and speak openly of the affection she feels for another person, be that person young or old, there is little to be feared from the friendship. And young girls will do this most willingly if they are sure that their confidence will meet with encouragement. It is the perception of jealousy which causes reserve. And though the excitement and romance of affection will go to the friend for a time; yet in such a case, almost certainly, it will revert to the mother afterwards. The fact of finding in her mother a person who can understand young feelings and young pleasures touches a

[1] Prov. xviii. 19.

daughter's heart deeply; whilst good sense and experience must ultimately teach her what the value of that love is, which is independent of her own faults, or of the accidents of life; and she will then look to her mother as her friend all the more trustingly, because, under her sanction, she has tried another friendship, and known its trials and its precariousness.

And this necessity of sympathy with friendship, as a safeguard against its risks, is applicable equally to those trying cases in which young persons, turn from their own natural advisers, and desire to be guided by some person out of their own family. There is no question that such extraneous influence may be injurious; but if, foreseeing the possibility of it, we have allowed it to grow up without check, we are bound to be merciful to it. Romantic and overweening friendships between governesses and pupils are often found to be objectionable; but instead of checking them at the outset, when the task would be easy, they are frequently allowed to go on, because there seems nothing tangible to complain of; and when the mischief has reached its height, some sudden severance is effected. But it is too late then to repair the evil. The influence has done its work; and it may, perhaps, take years before it can be undone. Undue influence and exaggerated friendship are things to be watched and guarded against carefully, but they can only be uprooted in their germ. When once they have been established, our wisest plan is to recognize them, and try to neutralize them by sympathy.

And if, as will frequently happen, the influence

exerted should be that of a really kind and wise friend,—one who sincerely wishes to give safe counsel, —then, however greatly it may jar upon our self-love, or disappoint our dreams of exclusive affection, we cannot do better than suffer it to take its course, and, even more, to encourage it. By encouraging, we make the influence, as it were, our own. The daughter who leans upon her mother's friend, does in fact lean upon the mother herself, and by degrees she will see this; and then the natural tie will be felt to strengthen and hallow the friendship, and so by degrees influence will return to its natural channel.

Show anything like jealousy, and such a possibility is at an end.

But it will perhaps be said, all these things are questions of feeling. We cannot frame laws for affection. Persons will love each other according to their own fancies, and not according to relationship. And after all, what is the need of laying so much stress upon natural ties? Why may not a friend be dearer than a brother or a sister? Why may not a guide out of one's own family be more reverenced than one in it? Now, this is mis-stating the case. We cannot frame laws for affection. Nothing is more true. We may love a friend more than a sister, and reverence some person out of our family more than any one in it. And if friendship never went beyond the expression of this feeling, we might have cause to lament it, but no cause to blame. Even when young persons, or persons of any age, belonging to different families, have formed so devoted a friendship that they cannot be happy apart, it is still only a

misfortune. Circumstances do not generally allow of individuals separating themselves from their relations, and forming a home apart; and because of this, such exclusive affection awakens, in most cases, a tantalizing, dissatisfied feeling, and is likely to produce more unhappiness than happiness; and therefore it is to be guarded against, though it may not be condemned. But when romantic friendship puts itself forward as having a claim above those ties which God has formed by nature, it becomes the source of untold misery to all who are connected with it.

And this is, of course, its tendency. Overpowering feeling of any kind naturally claims to be its own law, in opposition to the definite laws of God. It is the Dictator to which for the time all must submit. And in the case of affection, this assumption cuts the Gordian knot of so many difficulties, that it is not unfrequently adopted by friendship, as well as by love; and persons will neglect the plainest, most paramount duties of their homes, for the sake of some self-chosen friend, and think themselves justified, because the feeling on both sides is so strong that it would be cruel to expect a different course of action. Now, such a delusion as this cannot, without great difficulty, be mastered, when feeling has long been allowed to hold dominion over reason and principle. And because, in some form or other, more or less exaggerated, it is likely to meet us continually in life, it may be well to inquire more closely into the mental training which is required so to keep affection in its proper place, that it may never claim an unlawful authority. For it is mental, quite as much as moral, training which is needed. The error alluded

to is owing to a confusion of ideas as to the relative claims of natural and self-chosen relationship,—. taking that word in its extended sense, as including the relations into which we enter with all persons in the intercourse of life. These claims, like those of law, are binding in different degrees; but the first paramount claim of all is intended by God to be that of blood. In order to confirm this assertion, we need only remark the fact that civil law, which is based upon natural law, is not at liberty to recognize any other claim. If two persons were to go into a court of justice, and one were to rest his title to an estate upon distant kinship; whilst the plea of the other was that of devoted friendship, the latter would be considered a madman. And society recognizes the same imperative claim. The first question which is asked when a man leaves his money to a friend is;—Had he any relations? And if it should be proved that he had;—although the relations may be distant and unknown, and the friend very dear, yet there will always arise a certain sense of injustice; possibly not well founded, for the claims of blood may be diminished till they become scarcely recognizable; and the claims of friendship, on the other hand, may be of a very overwhelming character;—but the mere fact that it is possible to argue upon the question, whether a man who leaves his fortune to his dear friend, ought not rather to have chosen as his heir his third or fourth cousin, whom he has never seen, shows what the feeling of society, founded upon the laws of nature, is, as to the permanent claim of ties of blood.

And if we look to the Bible, we shall find this claim of blood everywhere clearly acknowledged and

displayed. Abram's appeal to Lot is, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and 'thy herdmen; for we be brethren."[1] Joseph forgives his brethren with a freedom from reproach which would have been almost impossible if they had been only friends. Very grievous as was the wrong which had been done to him, yet the yearning for the restoration of the tie of blood was so great, that it overcame the sense of injury; and every one in reading the story accepts this feeling as natural.

The laws which Moses framed for the Jews under the sanction of God, are all founded upon the recognition of the same tie. The instances are too numerous to require quotation. So also David, after the rebellion of Absalom, reproaches his relations, his brethren of the house of Judah, that they had overlooked this tie: "Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?"[2] And, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he devotes a special psalm to the description of the blessings which rest upon brethren who observe it, and who "dwell together in unity."[3]

And when we turn to the New Testament, we shall find that the family relationship is considered so sacred, that it is adopted as the exclusive symbol of the more solemn and lasting tie which exists between those who are admitted into the family of Christ. "Brethren" is the one title applied to Christians viewed in their relation to each other. "Brother goeth to law with brother,"[4] is the stern reproof of St. Paul. And

[1] Gen. xiii. 8.
[2] 2 Sam. xix. 12.
[3] Psa. cxxxiii.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 6.

the duties of brethren include the exercise of a forbearance, courtesy, and sympathy, to be exhibited at all times, and under all circumstances; and leaving no room for questions of choice or varying feeling, such as might arise in the case of friends. Brothers are brothers always, and so also are Christians.

And why should all this be said? No one will dispute it.

Very true. But almost every one will, when the occasion offers itself, act against it.

In fact, we make the very strength of the claim a plea for disregarding it. Because we know that the tie between brothers and sisters cannot, in one sense, be broken; too often we venture to play with it and weaken it. Children are allowed to do this in the nursery. They tease each other as they would never tease their playfellows. They are rude to each other when they would be ashamed of being so to strangers. Boys tyrannize over girls, and girls are fretful and aggravating with boys; and no one thinks it of much consequence. Brothers and sisters, it is said, always quarrel, and things will come right by and by, when the children are older! Perhaps it may be so. There is a very wonderful tenacity of existence in these family ties. It would seem sometimes as if no rough usage could really destroy them; but the "threefold cord," which cannot be violently broken, may be untwisted; and the hand which untwists will often unknowingly be that of a friend. When the gentleness, consideration, and unselfishness, which are rightfully the due of a brother or sister, are bestowed upon a friend, there springs up a sense of injustice. Upon this will follow unkind thoughts and reproach-

ful words, and then will come alienation of heart. And if children are not taught from their infancy to recognize the fact that these family ties have a paramount claim, they will almost necessarily fail to perceive its truth; or if they do perceive it, they will almost as certainly reason themselves out of it. Personal feeling, similarity of tastes, the mere romance of friendship, are all so many apparent counterbalancing claims to those of family relationship. And the self-denial which is required to act in opposition to them is great, and few will attempt to practise it. Doubtless, it is the fact of the estrangement of the affections from home relations, which is the real grievance in the case of exaggerated friendship; but this estrangement is almost always accompanied by little neglects, forgetfulnesses, want of accustomed sympathy, trifling acts of selfishness, which awaken and aggravate the incipient jealousy; and which would have been guarded against if a due consideration for home ties had been enforced from infancy.

People so little imagine the mischief they are doing —the seeds of future discord which they are sowing —by allowing their children to behave uncourteously to one another. Family life, in its great unreserve and familiarity, must always be a trial to the infirmity of human nature. Politeness, deference, and mutual respect, which constitute the police of society, and, upon the whole, manage to keep the peace well, are equally required in private life. And the family, it must be remembered, is the training school for the world. The brother who is taught to be courteous to his little sister in the nursery, will be considerate to her when he is a man. The sister

who habitually regards her sister's feelings in childhood, will not disregard them in later years.

Family feeling may, indeed, like everything else, be exaggerated. It may become prejudice and exclusiveness, but its fundamental principle is a right one; and as it is unquestionably one of the great safeguards of social order, so it will always be found to be the mainspring of right action in private life.

In many cases the claim of relationship is, indeed, the only guide we have in the perplexity of conflicting duties. God has stamped the seal of His approval on it. He has made an offence against a brother far more deadly than an offence against a friend. Nature, society, declare it to be so; and the Bible proclaims it in every page. The sin which may and must separate friends, because it destroys the respect and affection which formed the bond of friendship, may not separate the members of a family. It must be acknowledged and lamented, but it does not justify alienation. And the personal offence which we should rightfully resent in the one case, must be overlooked in the other. It is almost impossible to overstate the importance of inculcating this primary principle upon children; for the events of life will try its strength to the very utmost. The most fatal of all heirlooms is the inheritance of a family quarrel; and yet no one can avoid the differences of opinion which may lead to it; and nothing but the deepest sense of the sacredness of the ties of blood will, in the hour of trial, save us from becoming a party to it.

And, after all, watch as we will, warn as we will, friendship and family ties will continually come into collision, and we cannot prevent it. It is an imper-

fection belonging to our present state of being, and we have nothing to do but to accept it. Yet we may, in some measure, guard against it. Even when children are very little, we shall do well to watch their companionships. When they are rather older, we shall be wise in checking altogether anything approaching to extreme and exclusive intimacy. Girls of twelve or thirteen are much better without anything of the kind. The charm of such intimacy generally consists of secrets and confidences which are exceedingly injurious; and as it is difficult to prevent these without showing suspicion, it is safe to keep the children, if possible, out of the way of temptation. But beyond this age, when the mind and the deeper feelings of the heart begin to develop, we shall probably do more harm than good by interfering with friendship. If we can share it, we may render it safe. If we insist upon the observance of all family claims as a first duty, we may lessen the risk of its interfering with family happiness, but we can do nothing more.

Human affections are in the hands of God. He only can direct them. And ignorant as we are of the events which lie before us, it is not for us to say what will or will not be best for our children's happiness. We interfere roughly with a girl's friendship, and we erect a barrier which prevents her from ever again clinging to us in confidence. We think that we are saving her from undue influence, and we leave her to desolateness of heart. Far rather may we trust these things to God. Where there is no actual right or wrong in the case, where there is no moral reason for interfering to stop a friendship

altogether, the question of its degree is one which it is best to leave. We can never make young people care for each other less by telling them that their love is foolish. If we will but wait patiently, time and the changes of life will work for us in many ways which we could little have anticipated. And after all friendship is part of the discipline of life. It is intended to have a certain influence in the formation of character, and God, through its means, is effecting that formation. We are apt to think that we can do so much in developing character. We talk as if human hearts were in our own hands to mould just as we will; that we may make the young what we choose by placing them in safe positions, giving them good associations, surrounding them by wise friends. It is all a mistake, founded upon the supposition that we know what is safe, and good, and wise. We have only to watch the trees and flowers: the children we love so anxiously are just like them. What can we do for them? Plant, water, prune, train—it sounds like positive work: but look into it narrowly, and it is only negative. Rain and sunshine, dews and frosts, must be sent in the proportion which God sees fit, or our plant will not flourish; and if, attempting to take the work out of His Hands, we remove it from its natural soil, and place it under shelter, and watch over it exclusively ourselves, it will die.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION.

MANY subjects have now been discussed in connection with Education;—Law, and Obedience, Reverence, Truth, Justice, Selfishness, Pride, Vanity, Purity, Love, Friendship;—and the principle which is the basis of all law, that without which every other principle must fail of its completeness, has been omitted. Nothing has been said definitely of education in Religion.

The omission has, perhaps, appeared strange, but it has had a purpose. We are sometimes told that before receiving any other instruction children should be instructed in religion. Now, what do people mean when they say this? What is the popular idea of religion?

The answer will probably be, Christian doctrine—the Love of God, founded upon the revelation which He has made of Himself, in Jesus Christ.

Undoubtedly, this is one phase of religion—its most important phase. But religion cannot mean only this, because, if so, what do we understand by natural religion — that religion of which Bishop Butler speaks, when he says, that "the general system of religion is, that the government of the world is

uniform, and one, and moral; that virtue and right shall finally have the advantage, and prevail over fraud and lawless force, over the deceits as well as the violence of wickedness, under the conduct of one Supreme Governor?"[1] Surely this refers to a religion distinct from Christian doctrine.

No, it may be replied, it does not refer to religion, but to morality. But what is morality? How is it to be distinguished from religion? If it implies obedience to the moral laws of our nature, who impressed upon us those moral laws? Was it not God? And must not everything which has reference to Him be religious? Can truth and justice exist apart from Him? And when we educate children in truth and justice are we not, so far, educating them religiously?

It may appear an abstract question, of no very great moment, and yet upon the answer must depend the whole system of religious education.

If religion and morality are entirely distinct, then certainly we are required to explain clearly to a little child, from the first dawn of reason, what religion means. We must point out wherein it differs from morality, and insist upon the superiority of those duties which have reference immediately to God, over those which are connected only with man. But if, on the other hand, morality is and always must be more or less religious, then we may be happy in the consciousness that every time we instruct a child in its moral duties, and teach it to be truthful, obedient, reverent, and unselfish, we are actually

[1] Butler's Analogy, Part I. chap. iii.

instructing it in religion; and we may choose that mode of inculcating religious duty which the child can most easily comprehend; taking the course which God appears to point out in nature, and leading it upwards from the laws of its own moral consciousness, which it perceives intuitively, to Him who is the Author of those laws.

Under this view, we shall recognize, as a child's first religious act, the obedience which the little infant pays to its mother, before it can even comprehend the fact of the Being of a God; and every successive act of obedience, or, indeed, any exhibition of moral goodness, may then be regarded as an act of religion. It is not required that the child shall clearly understand the obligation of these moral laws; it must obey long before it can understand them: but the principle of subjection to them is the same principle which must afterwards be more fully developed when it is capable of understanding the moral obligations which are involved in man's relations to God, not only as his Creator, but also as his Redeemer and Sanctifier.[1]

The man who can understand these relations, and fails in the duties of gratitude, devotion, and obedience, which are rightly consequent upon them, is irreligious; but the child, who cannot understand them, and therefore fails to fulfil them, is not irreligious, so long as he does fulfil those obligations which are open to his comprehension.

A mistake upon this point is the source of very fatal errors in education. Earnestly religious parents,

[1] Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. i.

desiring above all things that their children should grow up in the love of God, and acknowledging nothing as worthy the name of a religious act, but that which proceeds from the definite motive of devotion to Him, strive to awaken in their children that same deep sense of Christian doctrine which they find so infinitely influential in themselves. They imagine that by constantly quoting the Bible,—especially those portions which refer to man's sinfulness and our Blessed Lord's Atonement,—and by appealing to the children's feelings of love and gratitude, they shall arouse interest, and quicken affection. When they find that they fail,—that the children become cold and constrained, and shrink from these subjects,—they say that it is an evidence of the corruption of a fallen nature,—the result of the natural alienation of the human heart from God. Perhaps they redouble their efforts—most certainly they pray for the children's conversion; or, as they term it,—with a singular disregard of the distinct meaning of the two words,—their regeneration. But through it all, they feel it is a case in which man is so entirely helpless, that he can but bide God's time; submitting His Will, whilst mourning over the hardness of heart of the children in every other respect so amiable.

But suppose the truth to be that the children are not really averse from religion, but that they shrink from the peculiar form in which it is presented to them; that they cannot understand it, and that, from some cause or other, it jars upon them. This is quite possible; in fact, if we examine the question carefully, we shall find that it is very probable.

The foundation of Christian doctrine is the sense

of sin, the deep consciousness of the need of a Saviour. The man who, after a life of alienation from God, wakes up to the perception of God's just hatred of sin, and his own danger in consequence, feels this need intensely. The Atonement of Christ, and his own consequent pardon, are to him the very foundation of peace and unutterable thankfulness. He rests upon that one thought, and it becomes to him the mainspring of a new life. So also the man whose heart is already devoted to God, who strives to serve Him with a perfect service, feels more and more, day by day, the infinite imperfection of his service, and the absolute necessity of some other plea than his own righteousness, if he is ever to hope for acceptance with an All-Holy God. With him also the Atonement of Christ is the one thought of rest, and the one influential motive of action.

But when we speak to a child of this deep sense of sin, this overpowering need of atonement, we speak to it of what it can only partially understand.

The conviction of sinfulness cannot possibly be overwhelming in the heart of a child, for it is only learning by degrees what sin is. It is in the effort to be obedient, truthful, reverent, loving, that it perceives its own weakness. The more a child longs to do right, the more it will grieve because it does wrong. The "law is its schoolmaster to bring it unto Christ."[1] If we expect to bring it to Christ without the law, we shall fail. For this order of religious training is that adopted by God in his dealings both with the world in general, and with the

[1] Gal. iii. 24.

Jews in particular. The history of the heathen before the coming of our Lord, is the history of fallen man's vain and fruitless efforts to find out God, and to please Him. As St. Paul said to the Athenians, God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."[1] Mankind failed in this search. Some few amongst the heathens, indeed, recognized the law of God in their own moral nature, and set themselves to obey it; but they were powerless to convert their fellow-creatures; and when at length this powerlessness had been fully shown, the great principle of renewal—faith in Him who had atoned for sin—was revealed, and the weary heart of man accepted it, and the world became Christian.

So also it was, in a measure, with the Jews. They were in the position of children, and the mode by which God taught them to know Himself, is that which we must employ, if we would teach our children to know Him. The Jews had a perfect law given them in the Decalogue, which was the republication of the natural law written upon their hearts. They had also many positive laws, based upon this natural law. It was said to them, "Keep these laws and ye shall live." But they did not keep them; and because God knew that they could not, therefore, He gave them also sacrificial rites, shadowing forth the One Great Sacrifice which was eventually to be made for the sins of the whole

[1] Acts xvii. 26, 27.

world. It was in the midst of their shortcomings, and by the means of them, that He led them to look to something out of themselves, as the plea for their acceptance with Him. The principle of obedience led them on to the principle of faith. When they knew that they had disobeyed, they knew that a sacrifice must be offered. They connected the idea of atonement with that of sin. They learnt the need of it through the obligation of law. If the Jews had been left without definite laws, or without having them enforced upon their observance, they would never have appreciated the mercy which appointed the means of pardon; and if called upon to be thankful for those means, their hearts would have refused to respond to the appeal. And the obligation of law, and the need of atonement, were, it must be remembered, the lessons of every-day existence. The minuteness of the Jewish laws brought religion into the daily life of the Jewish people. An undisciplined race, fresh from the servitude and degradation of Egyptian bondage, they could never have worked out for themselves the necessity of absolute obedience to God in small things as well as great. The perfect law of the Decalogue, so broad and deep as to embrace the whole compass of man's duty, would have failed to influence them, because, in its vastness, it would have been misunderstood. It requires the thoughtful mind of the philosopher to reason out the truth that negative commands imply positive duties; and that the omission of the latter is a breach of the law, as really as the neglect of the former. The Jews were taught their own sinfulness and weakness by secondary rather than by primary laws. And in this respect

children are precisely like them. The very necessity we are under of bringing them up upon rules—though rules based upon principles—points out the mode by which insensibly and involuntarily we educate them in the comprehension of the nature and the extent of sin. The first consciousness of evil in the mind of a little child is not that of vanity or worldliness, or indifference to God; but of some trifling act of disobedience towards its parents; the infringement of some temporary law; and the first sense of sin against God is awakened by the fact of having sinned against man.

But we must observe further, that this sense of sinfulness, developed by the transgression of laws which are not in themselves obligatory, but which derive their authority from the person who enforces them, will never produce the same keen sense of guilt, as the transgression of the eternal laws which are part of man's moral nature.

The Jews must have felt this, and they were permitted to feel it. It is true that all their laws came immediately from God, and were all therefore binding to an extent which can belong to no law proceeding from human authority; but the difference between the feeling of repentance for sins against secondary laws, and that of repentance for sins against primary and eternal laws, is clearly shown in the one instance in David's life, in which we are told of his especially offending God.

The Almighty had commanded sacrifices to be offered for the sins of the Jewish people. He had given minute directions concerning them, and David had been a devout observer of these directions during the whole course of his life. But when he sinned

in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, we read nothing of a desire for such ritual atonement. The offence was too grievous, the conscience was too deeply wounded, to be soothed by anything short of the direct pardon of God; and in the sorrow of his heart David exclaims, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."[1]

This is the repentance of the *man* as distinct from the repentance of the child. The latter is the prelude to the former, but it is not and cannot be the same; and therefore when we appeal to a child's sense of guilt, speak to it of the wrath of God, the necessity of punishment, the abounding mercy of our Redeemer's Atonement, and the unutterable gratitude which are due from us in consequence of it, we are appealing to a sense which, though it exists in the germ, is not yet fully developed; and as a necessary consequence the heart is cold.

Now, if we attribute this coldness to the natural alienation of the child from God, we shall of course be unhappy, and perplexed. The child will be to us a little heathen, and we shall be inclined to treat it as a heathen, to lament, and expostulate, and entreat, and argue; and—worst of all—to exhibit our own feeling, to express ourselves enthusiastically; and the result of it all will probably be that the child will become more and more cold, more and more averse from our society, and why? Simply because we are talking to it of what it does not yet understand, and

[1] Psa. li. 16, 17.

of feelings which it cannot as yet recognize as real: and the mind of a child shrinks, as instinctively, from the slightest touch of unreality, as the sensitive plant does from the touch of the human hand.

But meet a child upon its own ground, speak to it of the faults, and feelings which it does comprehend, and all this coldness and deadness will vanish.

It knows perfectly well what to be naughty, or wrong means; it has not yet learnt what being wicked means. Then let us take the sense of naughtiness, and touch the feelings through it. We may not complain of the child because it cannot see that all faults are sins; though unquestionably they are so. That knowledge will come by and by, and a very bitter knowledge it will be; and when it does come, the heart will open to God, and repentance, and confession, and prayer, and the need of atonement will follow. But for the present let us be contented with and thankful for what we have. Better far is it that the child should say to its mother in simplicity and sincerity: "I am sorry I have been so naughty, please forgive me;" than that it should adopt the language which it does not feel, and say, "I am a grievous sinner, and I cast myself upon God's mercy in Christ as my only hope."

Cant is very easily learnt—cant of all kinds; whether it takes the form of Scripture texts and peculiar phraseology, or of a vain and morbid self-inspection and confession; and cant is the mortal enemy of true religion.

There will, indeed, be occasions in which more than this human sorrow, if it may be so called, will be felt, and more expressed; when, as in the case of

falsehood, the innate instincts of the moral sense have been wounded; and the little heart awakens to the awful consciousness that it has sinned against its Maker. Such instances are, however, comparatively rare, and as a general rule, we must content ourselves with a repentance which will fall far short of this, and which yet does not in the least betoken hardness of heart, still less indifference to religion itself, especially when it is exhibited in a practical form. Any person who has ever had experience in dealing with children will know that nothing is more easy than to arouse their earnestness and interest upon subjects connected with their moral improvement; so long as they are spoken to simply and unaffectedly, with gentleness, sympathy, and without any direct appeal to their devotional feelings. *That* they cannot endure. If these feelings do not exist, it is irritating to have it supposed that they do. If the contrary, the natural reserve of youth, and the instinctive sense of the sacredness and delicacy of such a subject, make it next to impossible to mention them; and should they be led to do so, it must always be with the risk more or less of unreality, since a child's religious experience is almost necessarily mixed up with vanity and self-consciousness as soon as it is brought to light.

And are we, then, to leave what is peculiarly called religion, entirely? to bring up a child upon the system of heathen philosophy—trusting to time and thought to expand this moral teaching into Christian doctrine?

God forbid! We will look again at the education of the Jews. They were taught their sinfulness by

the experience of their inability to keep the laws which were given them; but they were also taught God's willingness to forgive, by the sacrifices which were offered and accepted. These sacrifices were of various kinds; but the morning and evening sacrifices were of daily occurrence. How much they understood of the typical meaning of these rites is uncertain. The comprehension must have varied according to the thoughtfulness and intellect of different individuals; but the solemn mystery which lay hidden under them must have become more clear to the Jews as a nation as years went on, and the prophecies expanded the truths originally shadowed forth in symbols and ceremonies; since we find that when the great Antitype appeared there were those who were "looking for redemption in Israel," and who anticipated the advent of the Messiah as the fulfilment of all which the law had prefigured.

Now, what sacrifice was to the Jews, that the habit of prayer, in the Redeemer's name, is to a child. The sacrifices had a double meaning; they were acts of outward obedience, and types of the Great Atonement. The Jew who looked deeply into their meaning, and assisted in them with real faith, was doubtless more acceptable to God than he who merely participated in them as an act of obedience; but the outward worship was required alike of all; to all it was the daily reminder of sinfulness and atonement. As the mind of the nation developed, the Jews were, indeed, taught more and more clearly how valueless was the external act apart from the inward spirit. The Prophets gave them striking and solemn warnings upon this point: "To what purpose

is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. . . . When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine Eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."[1] But the laws of the Pentateuch enforce sacrifices with a strictness which appears to show that the act itself was important, apart from the comprehension of the worshipper. When the Jews as a nation were able to feel the meaning of their rites, then that feeling was required of them: but whilst they were in a state of infancy—only learning to know God—the outward act of obedience, so long as it was performed *in the spirit of obedience*, was accepted.

Somewhat of this same character may surely be remarked in the mode by which nature and custom teach us to educate a child in religion—by means of prayer. There may be some who suppose that it is useless to teach a child to pray until it can understand the meaning of the words it uses; but this is not a very common belief. The generality of persons —if they have any religious feeling at all—teach their little ones, as a matter of course, to repeat prayers, morning and evening, as soon as they can begin to lisp the words. They do it, they know not why. They obey what may almost be called an instinct; even as the Jews acknowledged the necessity of the morning and evening sacrifices, with only a distant understanding of what was implied by them.

[1] Isaiah i. 11, 15.

But if persons are very earnest, they probably are not satisfied with this practice: prayer is to them the expression of the inmost soul—they wish it to be so with their child. The little voice utters those all-powerful words—"through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and the mother longs to make the heart unite with it. And quite rightly—quite naturally. But it will not be quite rightly and naturally if she supposes that she can really carry out her wish. She may explain, and the child may listen, and—what is infinitely wonderful—grasp the abstract idea presented to it. But abstract ideas do not touch the heart; they are but the distant glimmer of the Eternal Light which is to be our guide to glory; and the mother will be greatly disappointed, if she imagines that because her child from the very dawn of reason was led to think and speak of God, and of salvation through Christ, therefore it can be led to act from what are peculiarly termed religious motives.

It may be well to look into this more narrowly. That a child's mind can take in the idea of God—comprehending in that idea Infinity, Eternity, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence—is a proof that it was originally made in the Image of Him in whom these attributes centre. That it can recognize moral truths, is a proof that, in the Being from whom its nature is derived, moral perfection is embodied: and so also, it would seem, that the readiness with which the little child receives the two ideas of Incarnation and Atonement is a witness to the abstract truth of these ideas.

But we must all know the difference between recognizing great truths intellectually, and recog-

nizing them morally and practically. It is only when the abstract is presented to us in the concrete, that the latter effect is produced. The God of the Pantheist and the God of the Christian alike represent Omnipotence and Omnipresence, Eternity and Immutability; but the one is an idea, the other a person, and it is only as a Person that the perfections of the Deity can awaken personal feelings. Love, gratitude, reverence, obedience, are aroused, not by the abstract idea of God, but by the perception of His actual being and His moral attributes.

Now, the abstract is grasped at once. It is felt before it is understood; the idea of truth is grasped, by being felt, though the child cannot explain what truth means. The concrete, on the contrary, is understood only by degrees. And from not appreciating the distinction between these two forms of comprehension, parents are often startled and perplexed in dealing with their children's minds. They find in their little ones most marvellous powers of taking in the very deepest abstract ideas, united with the most infantine absurdity in the mode of exhibiting them. One moment, a child appears a prodigy of intellect and thought; the next, a prodigy of simple ignorance. It will put together the most incongruous ideas, exciting the sense of the ludicrous in connection with the most solemn subjects, and all the while be perfectly insensible to the incongruity. In these cases, it is trying to form a concrete representation of the abstract idea which it has in its infant mind; and because the true representation is not yet realized, it creates for itself that which, it imagines, most nearly approaches it.

Not long ago a little child of two years old said to its mother, "I shall go up to heaven quite alone, but I won't be shy. Only I won't shake hands with God, but I will kiss Jesus Christ, and play with the angels."

Every one will feel that although a smile may rise to the lips when these words are repeated, yet there is no smile in the heart, but rather a tear. For as the child spoke she recognized the spiritual under the material, and touched the fountain springs of that poetry, which is far deeper than philosophy. Unconsciously the little mind had grasped the abstract ideas of the awful, incomprehensible Nature of God, the Father; the human as well as the Divine Nature in God, the Son; and the finite Nature of the angels. The wisest philosopher could not *know* more than the child *felt*. When she wished to express these abstract ideas she seized upon the first concrete ideas which presented themselves, and under these forms she exhibited them.

The result might, to our blunted perceptions, be ludicrous; but in the sight of God we may not doubt that it was sacred and acceptable.

The working of the same incongruity with similar results may be perceived in the infancy of poetry and art; in the latter especially. The Pre-Raphaelite Madonnas, and Fra Angelico's Angels, at the first careless glance strike us as quaint if not grotesque. Study them more closely, and the purity of the abstract ideas embodied in them comes clearly into view; and the very discrepancy between the majesty of the conception, and the childish simplicity of the execution, touches our hearts to the quick.

Wonderful as a child's unconscious grasp of abstract religious truth unquestionably is, it cannot, however, be depended upon as a motive power, apart from its realization under a true and definite form. Yet in most cases it is the utmost that can be expected either in infancy or for several years afterwards.

Let us look back ourselves. What can we recall as our understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer when we were very young? Or even yet more simple prayers, the first we were ever taught, how vague were the ideas which the words we uttered conveyed to us! To expect deep feeling in connection with those half perceptions would be as unreasonable as to expect that the Jew, who assisted at the offering of sacrifice in the wilderness, and understood that in some way, he knew not how, it shadowed forth an awful sacrifice to come, could feel what the disciples felt when they stood at the foot of the Cross; or what we ourselves may sometimes have felt, when, burdened by the intolerable sense of sin, we have knelt at our Redeemer's feet with the cry: "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me!"

Pray, children must. It is their one recognition of their immediate duty to God. And be taught the meaning of prayer they must; for as their minds develop God will require the worship of the whole being, and we must gradually prepare them for it. And pray in the name of the Redeemer they must; for however little they may realize what is involved in that Name, it is, and can be, their only plea for acceptance; and, by degrees, God will open the eyes

of their mind, and teach them how to rest upon it. But if we attempt to force feeling, if we desire to draw it forth, and gaze upon it, in order to satisfy ourselves of its presence, we shall infallibly destroy it.

There is, indeed, a sorrow for faults committed against man, which a child will express naturally and readily; and very touching, and full of self-reproach it is to the proud spirit of mature years, to hear the simple confession "I am so very sorry," come forth as it often does from the very depths of the little heart, which is only just beginning to feel its capabilities of sin. The natural impulse of an earnestly religious parent, then, is to lead a child upwards from this feeling to the higher sense of having sinned against God. And it is, no doubt, quite right to bring before it this deeper view of the fault that has been committed. But when we have done this, we shall, in almost all cases, be wise to pause. A very few words said with real earnestness, and without any strained solemnity of manner, will be sufficient to show our meaning, and then the child is much better left alone to the working of its own conscience, and the influence of God's Spirit. Feeling, if excited, will rarely show itself in our presence. We may kneel down and pray—some persons would think it wrong not to do so—and the child may kneel by our side; but the act of kneeling is not prayer. Left to itself, the young heart, if really moved, would pour itself forth without restraint, and would, perhaps, learn, for the first time, what prayer really means; but the feelings awakened towards God can at that age be expressed only before God. The slightest

shyness causes restraint and coldness; and thus, instead of assisting, we only check the devotional feeling, and the child leaves us, conscious of a jar, and with a fresh sense of sin from finding in itself, as it supposes, a dislike to religion.

This observation is, indeed, open to correction. Children vary, as grown-up people do, in sensitiveness and reserve. The fact that some persons care only for extempore prayers, whilst others find their devotion chilled by them, is a sufficient proof that we cannot lay down rigid laws upon this subject. But it is certainly safe to calculate upon a child's reserve upon sacred subjects; more especially as this will prevent us from yielding to disappointment if we do not discover any indication of religious feeling; or from pursuing that most unwise plan of forcing its expression, in order to convince ourselves that it exists.

But acquiescence in what is apparently a state of dormant religion in children must, of course, be based upon the acknowledgment that they are members of Christ's family; and that their inward development may be safely left to the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. If we do not accept this fundamental truth, we shall no doubt be miserable about them, until we see some distinct evidences of their regeneration apart from their obedience to the moral law.

What view those who do not look upon their children as admitted at baptism into the family of Christ take of their condition, it must be left to themselves to explain; but there is probably no person who has accepted this truth as a starting point, and

patiently and conscientiously acted upon it, in a course of Christian education, who will not bear witness to the wonderful assistance which it gives in training and developing Christian feeling and principle from the very dawn of reason. It must do so necessarily. The first idea of definite religion which the child grasps is that of the Existence of God. But this abstract idea requires to be presented in a certain form, before it can influence conduct. Tell the child that God is its Father, and you have the true form at once. The relation of child to parent is the actual relation in which, according to the acknowledgment of all Christians, the true follower of the Redeemer stands to his Almighty Creator. Half the difficulties of our religious life, both in doctrine and in practice, would vanish, if we would only reason upon the feelings and acts of God, according to the analogy of this human relationship. The little child, therefore, who is taught that God is actually its Father, sets out on its Christian course with a clue by which it may learn to disentangle almost all difficulties. From the love of its earthly father, it learns to understand the love of its Heavenly Father; from the sense of dependence in the one relationship, it learns to realize what is meant by dependence in the other; from the tender sympathy of the elder brother, it learns somewhat of the nearness and sympathy of Christ; from the spirit which pervades the family, uniting them in one body, it learns to realize the existence of the one gracious Spirit dwelling alike in every Christian heart. All these lessons depend upon the one primary truth that the child is God's

child. Take away this, and the truths derived from it must of necessity be negatived. And in like manner, as it has been before observed, recognize the fact that the child is Christian by virtue of its baptism, and you can afford to wait patiently for the evidence of definite Christian feeling. The little one who is taught that God is its Father, learns to be religious, as it learns to be obedient. Submission to a parent is its first notion of duty, but the abstract idea of a parent is blended in its mind with the abstract idea of God. The two grow and expand together. Obedience to the earthly parent becomes sacred, because the relationship is the same which exists between the child and its God, and thus the little daily acts of submission become insensibly hallowed. The child does not know, consciously, that it is acting from the wish to please God, but it *feels* that the parent embodies the idea of God; and, blending the two, it increases, even as the infant Redeemer Himself, "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."[1]

For there is growth, though it may not be evidenced to us, in the particular form in which we have been led to expect it. The blossom is not the fruit; yet, without the blossom, there would be no fruit; and the blossoms of religion are, reverence, obedience, and truth, as its fruits are faith and love. Watch over the former, cherish and nourish them, and, through God's grace, in due time the fruits will appear. Attempt to force the fruit, and we may, per-

[1] St. Luke ii. 52.

haps, obtain a few feeble specimens, which we may regard, for the moment, as marvels, and call upon the world to admire; but the plant from which they have been gathered is, in its constitution, sickly, and when the time comes that it must be exposed to the bleak winds of temptation, it will, in all probability, perish.

CHAPTER IX.

DEFINITE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

We have spoken of what may be called the blossoms of religion, as distinct from its fruit. Of these, the one which peculiarly needs cultivation as a preparation for religious feeling is reverence. The moralist, the sceptic, or even the unbeliever, may strive to bring up a child in obedience and truth, but to recognize the primary duty of reverence belongs exclusively to the Christian. For by reverence, in its full sense, is meant not only mental reverence, though based upon the full acknowledgment of the power and goodness of the Almighty; but outward, personal reverence, such as no one can mistake;—reverence evidenced by signs, as clearly as the respect shown to the position of an earthly sovereign, or the dignity of human authority.

To make a little child kneel down quietly, repeat its prayer carefully,[1] rise from its knees slowly, and

[1] Prayer, though the most important of a child's religious duties, is that over which we can exercise least direct influence, except with regard to outward reverence.

We may not interfere with it; we can, only in a general way, give hints for its guidance. Forms of prayer are very necessary at first; but we dare not insist upon their being always used. We

remain still for a few seconds before its mind rushes towards other subjects, may seem mere formality to the mother, whose only thought is how to make it feel the words it utters; but it is the only lesson of religion which it is in her power to give, and, in all probability, it is the only one which the child, for some years, will be capable of receiving. Words of repentance put into a little child's mouth, or repeated for it, do not, necessarily, awaken the feeling of repentance, because the child does not as yet understand the nature of sin. But a child's reverent action calls up the spirit of reverence, because there is in the very nature and position of childhood, that which answers to the appeal. Children are born reverent, because they are born to recognize and submit to power. Many things—carelessness, temper, pride, the difficulty of fixing attention—may give rise to irreverent actions, but the spirit of irreverence is not inevitably connected with them. And if we would only, from children's earliest

may, however, as young people begin to take an interest in religious subjects, suggest the desirableness of collecting and arranging prayers, psalms, and hymns for themselves; and if they desire such aid, we may assist them in the work. We may also point out strongly the necessity of constant prayer, and that not confined to the morning and the evening. At special solemn seasons, we shall find that even a very young and thoughtless child will be thankful to be given a short prayer, to be used in the middle of the day; whilst, as time goes on, the practice may be urged as most important always; for it will tend, more perhaps than any other habit, to deepen and perpetuate religious feelings; and the check upon self-indulgence which it necessitates, will, even apart from the great spiritual blessings to be expected from it, help to keep the young mind real in its religion.

infancy, accustom them to be simply reverent in all things connected with their religious duties, we should do more towards maturing the spirit of religion in their hearts than we could by giving them the fullest doctrinal instruction, or accustoming them to the freest expression of their needs in their daily devotion.

"These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."[1] Doctrinal instruction, prayer from the heart, are excellent—most excellent—but they belong to a more advanced age. The child of two years old may be made reverent; and when it is old enough to receive instruction, it will listen all the more humbly, and when it pours forth its first conscious petitions, it will be all the more earnest, because, before it could either understand or pray—in the true sense of prayer—it was made to exhibit in action that first principle of religion—which, as yet, was all it could comprehend—reverence for the Almighty Being who created it.

And surely this is the teaching of the Bible. Reverence was the one great lesson given, first to Moses, and then to the people, whom he was to rule —the nation of children.

"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. . . . . And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."[2]

"And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace,

[1] Matthew xxiii. 23.

[2] Exod. iii. 5, 6.

and the whole mount quaked greatly. . . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." [1]

And following out this principle, the whole of the Mosaic law was an exemplification of the principle of reverence for God's Name, His sanctuary, His ark, His priests, His worship; a reverence shown in the most minute details, as if it was a point so carefully to be guarded, that without it no other form of obedience could be acceptable. It was the teaching needed for the religious education of childhood. With the deep devotion, the vivid realization of religious truth which belongs to a more advanced period of life, reverence is joined of necessity; it becomes a thing of course. And so it is that we find in the New Testament the external forms of reverence left almost entirely to man's choice, whilst the inward Spirit is insisted upon as the one thing needful.

"God is a Spirit," were the words of Our Blessed Lord to the woman of Samaria, "and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." [2]

But this outward reverence should, in the case of children, be very simple. To kneel, or stand, or sit perfectly still, and to repeat solemn words slowly, will be quite a sufficient effort for a very little child. And as time goes on the lesson will be more and more frequently inculcated. If the Bible is read there will be a little preparation for it. It may seem a very small thing to move all other books from the table when a

[1] Exod. xix. 18, 21.

[2] St. John iv. 24.

party of children gather together for Scripture reading; or to insist that no other book shall be laid upon the Bible; and yet this strictness will recall the attention of the most thoughtless. A prayer, such as the Collect for the second Sunday in Advent, said, as the children stand up before beginning to read, will force upon them that the Bible cannot be studied like any other volume, but that it requires the special aid of God's Spirit if we are to profit by it. And in reading, if, instead of having the sacred words stumbled over by those who can scarcely pronounce them correctly, and certainly cannot appreciate their meaning, the mother or the governess would read them herself, a vast amount of unintentional irreverence might be saved; whilst the risk of inattention may be prevented by careful questioning, and explanation afterwards. This habit of reading the Bible to children, instead of making them read it aloud themselves, is also an advantage, because it admits of a choice of chapters and passages in the Old Testament, which, especially in a mixed company of boys and girls, is both helpful and desirable.[1]

[1] The daily reading of the Bible is a duty which we are all ready to own, but with regard to which we frequently find a difficulty in educating children. Some persons suppose that this daily reading ought necessarily to be always devotional. But this does not appear to be the intention of God in giving us the Bible. The sacred volume is historical, geographical, social, political, poetical, as well as devotional; and under these phases it requires a careful study, without which the strictly devotional portions cannot be perfectly understood.

Why this should be so, it would be presumption in us to attempt fully to decide; but it is evident that if the Scriptures had been, as we are often inclined to wish, thoroughly clear on all points,

Reverence in learning and repeating sacred lessons, the Psalms, Collects, Catechism, Hymns, &c., ought, also, to be strictly enforced. It may be permitted to give the sense instead of the words of a lesson in other cases; it cannot be so where the words to be remembered are sacred. This necessity of correctness in repetition will involve more time in learning what is to be repeated; it will make the words seem more important, and will impress that importance upon the young mind. God's Words, or even those words which speak of Him, will not be common, and, therefore, they will be more fully valued.

And so, also, with regard to behaviour in Church. Perfect reverence, involving an absence of all affectation and singularity of gesture (which, indeed,

mankind would never, for such a long series of years, have found in them an engrossing occupation for the intellect as well as the heart. Even, as in like manner, if the laws of nature had been self-evident, science would never have busied itself to discover them, and the mind of man would have been comparatively unemployed.

And looking at the Scriptures as intended to exercise the mental, as well as to guide the moral, powers, we shall scarcely err in directing children's attention, cautiously and reverently, to all which may throw light on what may be called the temporal aspect of the Bible; the connection of sacred history with profane; the peculiarities of ancient customs and the difficulties of language. Young people will take a vivid interest in such subjects; and when we have awakened thought in this way, it will not be difficult in a few words, simply and earnestly, as occasion may suggest, to bring forward the deeper and more hidden things of the Word of God. We shall, probably, find this plan more successful than that of making Scripture reading strictly devotional; for on the subject of personal religion, children are apt to be very sensitive, their feelings shrink from human touch, though they will expand freely under the Eye of Heaven.

awaken not reverence, but self-consciousness), will be found absolutely essential if we wish our children to grow up in that "fear of God" which will lead them to depart from the "ways of evil." But reverence in Church, we must remember, demands restraint for a much longer time than reverence in private prayer. And a little child cannot bear this restraint, and we must, therefore, be merciful to it.

It is much to be questioned whether the custom, common in our national schools, of collecting together in Church little children of five or six years of age, and making them stand, and kneel, and sit for two hours together, scarcely speaking or moving, is really conducive to reverence. Possibly it might be better if they were spared the ordeal of the sermon, which, undoubtedly, they cannot profit by. But there are great difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, and all that is urged now is for the consideration of those who are at liberty to carry out their own ideas. To them it may be said that Church services will, probably, be more highly estimated if they are regarded as a boon, than if they are insisted upon as a duty.

A baptism is, perhaps, the best service to which a child of three or four years old can first be taken; there is so much interest in it; and the impression left upon the mind is likely to be lasting and very salutary. After this, a short afternoon service—especially if there should be singing, and no sermon—may be tried; then, as the child learns to repeat the Lord's Prayer, a morning service may be chosen, care being taken that the Prayer is repeated whenever it occurs, so that the child may feel that it can

bear a part in what is going on. But it would seem better—not only in very early childhood, but for some time afterwards—to hold back certain portions of the Church services. For instance, to go to Church twice in the day, when looked upon as the privilege of elder persons, will be a coveted permission instead of an irksome burden. A week-day service will be a treat, if it marks special *fête* days. If we thus begin gradually teaching our little ones to associate the idea of God's House with rewards and enjoyments, the feeling of liking for it will increase insensibly, and we shall very soon find, if we are only consistent and reverent ourselves, that our children are learning to consider it a hardship when they are debarred from it.

And when this feeling has once been awakened we may rest satisfied at least for a time. A taste for going to Church does not, indeed, necessarily imply the existence of religious principle in the heart, but it prepares the way for it. In these days, it must be owned young people often show great interest in Church services, take a prominent part in choral music, and are critical, and even learned, as to ritual observances, and yet are not one whit the less conceited, presumptuous, self-willed, and uncharitable. But the fault lies not in the Church, but the home. If these same young people had been brought up reverently, they would handle sacred things reverently. If they had been taught to watch their own hearts, they would be on their guard against the temptations to which now they yield. No doubt it is worse to be vain and worldly at a daily service than in a ball-room; but it does not, therefore,

follow that a ball is better for the mind than a religious service. Outward forms, ceremonies, sacred music, are nothing in themselves; they may be turned to great evil, all the more because they profess to be, and indeed are, the instruments of great good; but we may easily test both ourselves and our children in all these matters. If we do not like to go to Church unless we can worship in a beautiful building, and listen to exquisite music, and hear an eloquent sermon, then we have no *real* liking for religious services at all. What we do like is merely the excitement—that very selfsame kind of excitement which meets us at the opera, and which is less dangerous because it is less self-deceiving. But if, on the contrary, we can join heartily in the prayers of the Church, and find rest in them under any circumstances, then the fact that our interest, or our feelings, are excited, or that our taste is gratified by the adjuncts of music and architecture is nothing to be alarmed at; but rather an indulgence which God, we may believe, has granted to us here, as a foretaste of the pleasures which we are to enjoy hereafter.

Reverence for the Lord's Day is another very important religious lesson to be early inculcated. The term "the Lord's Day" is used advisedly, because it seems to embody the principle by which the occupations of the day should be regulated. Sunday is a heathen, the Sabbath a Jewish term. We are neither heathens, nor Jews, but Christians; and we desire to keep sacred the first day of the week in a Christian spirit. The first thing to be remembered, then, is that it is the Lord's Day,—a day dedicated in an especial manner to the service of our Redeemer, so that

it permits no employment to be undertaken which has not, directly or indirectly, reference to Him. And the second is, that it is a day of joy—a festival. Bearing these two points in mind, we shall find little difficulty in bringing up our children to regard and make use of it rightly.

Now, very little children cannot be made to employ the whole of the Sunday in a definitely religious manner, because they are only learning, by very slow degrees, to comprehend the meaning of religion. But they can be taught, from their earliest infancy, to look upon it as a festival, a pleasant day, one on which they are to enjoy some special treat,—very trifling, perhaps,—merely being allowed to be more with their parents, to join them at dessert, to take a little walk, to gather flowers and make up nosegays,—it matters not what the pleasure is, so long as it is something, quiet and domestic, and reserved for Sunday. The first association with Sunday will then be that of enjoyment.

With this sense of enjoyment the sense of sacredness must undoubtedly be joined; but, still, the effort should be to make sacredness pleasant. Children must have something to occupy them. If we take away their dolls and toys, and give them nothing in return, they will be just as weary, restless, and irritable, as grown-up people who have nothing to do. Neither will they safely bear the excitement of play for a whole day on Sunday, any more than they will on any other day. To begin the day with a very little lesson, perhaps only a verse of a hymn, will be a tonic for all the hours that are to follow; and then there may be the pleasure of something,

especially put aside for Sunday,—a book of sacred prints, a Noah's ark, which, quaint though it is, has from long association acquired a *quasi* sacredness,—anything which deepens the idea that Sunday is a peculiar day;—very happy,—but on which it is not right to do precisely the same things that we do on other days. As children grow older and are taken to Church, they have necessarily less unoccupied time. They will be expected to learn Collects and Psalms, and repeat their Catechism, and have it explained; and this will employ a large portion of their leisure. Then there may be Sunday story books, and music, and at a later period some time may be spent in teaching others. All these employments will differ in different families. Some may have more leisure, some less; but the result will be the same in all, if the two great principles of sacredness and pleasantness are kept in view. It will not make children careless if they know that punishments are, as a rule, never carried on over Sunday; and if they are more readily excused any little forgetfulness on that day than on any other. The very fact of knowing that it is a day of jubilee will touch their sense of honour; and they will try to do well on Sunday from the highest of all principles—reverent love, which does not fear punishment, or look for reward.

And there may and ought to be definite religious instruction on the Sunday, but then it should be given orally, more in the form of conversation than as a lesson. Little children will listen with delight to stories told them out of the Bible. Those who are older will take great interest in explanations or

the Catechism, if they are given with illustrations, and brought home to their own experience; and older girls will really enjoy discussing subjects connected with Church history, and Church government, and will enter into really deep moral questions, if only the mother or the governess who is instructing them, will throw her own heart into the subjects brought forward, and show that she is studying for herself as well as for them.

Sunday lessons should never, strictly speaking, be lessons, because the principle of the day is freedom and enjoyment; freedom in God's presence, enjoyment in the consciousness that we are devoting our attention to things which, in a special manner, relate to Him. If young people are idle and careless when such subjects are brought before them, they may be quietly sent away, because they are disturbing others; but punishment will better be left for another occasion. That which is a pleasure to their companions is not so to them, therefore it will not be forced upon them; and neglect will, in most cases, prove more efficacious than reproach.

And it is through the means of this general conversation upon the externals of religion, that we shall at length succeed in reaching that which constitutes its reality. It is so in worldly matters. When two strangers are brought together, they do not begin by talking of their private interests, their feelings and affections. They keep upon the surface. They test and try each other, as it were, and then, if they find that they have any mutual subject of interest, they discuss it more intimately, with a certain increasing sense of union and cordiality; and

so, at length, they arrive at a knowledge of each other's tastes—perhaps of difficulties, sorrows, and trials. But such unreserve is a result reached only through time and caution. If either of them had plunged at once into the secrets of his own life, and given an account of his feelings, the probability is, that he would have repelled his friend instead of attracted him.

But all this is too often forgotten in religion. People suppose that they can awaken children's religious feelings by preaching to them, quoting texts, urging the necessity of spirituality. There is but one way which, through God's grace, will ever naturally and almost necessarily make our children religious, and that is, acting religion before them earnestly, consistently, and, for the most part, with but few words. The Spirit of God, working in the child's heart, makes itself heard in silence, for its voice is "still and small;" and though the religious feeling, when roused, will at certain times, and under certain circumstances, find an utterance, we cannot compel it to make itself known by speaking to it. And when these moments of unreserve do arise, we shall be wise in still retaining our caution.

The children need loving advice, and our object must be, therefore, to draw them on to tell their difficulties—not, be it remembered, their feelings; or, at least, these are better only alluded to. We do not want to extract confessions of deep sinfulness, or of longing for increased spirituality. These are for the Ear of God, and when we find the young heart burdened by such convictions of guilt and helplessness, which constitute the essence of inward religion,

we shall probably do well to use but very few words, pointing to the mercy of the Atonement, and the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and then leave the hidden mind to be influenced and moulded by Him who made it.

But one most frequent confession of all children, —may it not be said of all persons?—is, that they cannot feel;—that they can see the claims of religion, that they can even strive to attend to them, but that their service is mechanical. Enthusiastic representations of God's Love, fervent appeals to the sense of gratitude, will not, under such circumstances, awaken the heart from its state of conscious deadness. But there is a thought, which, when made practical, will seldom fail to touch it. Any action, be it ever so trivial, which is done deliberately with a view to please God, does please Him. Let the next thing that presents itself in the way of duty—no matter what—it may be only writing a note, be performed with the thought that God is looking on, seeing why and how it is done, and approving it, because it is an effort made definitely for Him, an attempt to do His work.

That must be a very cold heart—much colder than a child's heart generally is—which can be insensible to the consciousness of that approval—which does not thrill at the idea of the Redeemer's loving smile. Deepen, enlarge, and perpetuate the thought, and we arrive at the principle of Faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;"[1] and then will come permanent feeling, rising by degrees, as the religious principle intensifies, from the

[1] Heb. xi. 1.

love of a child to its parents, to the love of the redeemed sinner for Him who died for him. A life thus based upon faith, cultivated by the constant recognition of God's presence, rests upon a foundation which nothing can disturb. For with true faith, there will ever be joined that full dependence upon God's aid, that simple reliance upon the Gift of His Holy Spirit, which, after all, is the one absolute essential for the formation and growth of the religious spirit.

We have spoken of earthly means, earthly instruments, words, and deeds; because God has pledged Himself to work for us only if we work for ourselves. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." [1] We must educate children wisely if we hope to reap the fruits of wisdom, but the greatest unwisdom of all is dependence on our own strength.

This is a truth which must especially be insisted upon when writing upon education, because the very necessity of dwelling upon human means compels us at times to speak as if human wisdom was everything.

Effort without prayer is simply useless. We have one duty, above all others, connected with the religious education of children; and that is, to put them into God's hands, and to teach them that "His strength is made perfect in their weakness." It is with us all, as many may have felt when a strong hand has been placed behind them to help them up a steep ascent. If the aid is really to be used,

[1] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

they must lean upon it, even whilst they move forwards. There must be the sense of powerlessness accompanying the energy of exertion. Attempt to move without leaning, and the natural weakness is felt painfully; for the aid which might have been so efficacious is of no avail to those who cannot bring themselves to rest upon it.

CHAPTER X.

DEFINITE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—(*continued*).

HAVING given the caution contained in the last chapter, a few more remarks may be made upon the right religious teaching which is needed for a child's education. The heart can, as it has been acknowledged, only be touched by the Spirit of God, and all the instruction we may give will by itself utterly fail of attaining the end we have in view. Yet it is nevertheless most necessary, and, without it, fervent devotion, and even sincerity of heart, may ultimately lead only to fatal errors.

God gives the spirit of devotion; but in a certain sense it may be said that it is left to man to determine into what kind of mould that spirit shall be poured. Religious feeling, when strongly excited, adapts itself to the form through the medium of which it has been awakened. The man converted by a Baptist becomes a Baptist, or by a Quaker becomes a Quaker. The emotional impulse is so much stronger than the intellectual, that it is next to impossible for any person who is, for the first time, thoroughly roused to a perception of his immortal interests by one peculiar exhibition of divine truth, to sit down calmly and examine whether this is the

most true and well grounded statement of it which he can hold. His feelings and prejudices are all enlisted in its favour, and he seems to have no alternative but that of accepting the inward witness, which he thenceforward is led to assert to be the only true witness.

And though sudden conversions are the exceptions rather than the rules in religious experience, yet conversion of some kind every one who has attained to the conviction that religion is the one, sole, infinitely important object of man's interest upon earth, must have undergone; because this conviction does not belong to the ignorance of a fallen nature. We may have awakened by degrees—we may not be aware of the precise moment at which our eyes were first opened; but awakened we are; and because of this awakening we feel ourselves compelled to act; and action must always be carried on according to some external law, either chosen for ourselves, or presented for our acceptance by others. And therefore, before the devotional spirit is stirred in the mind of a child, before we can even expect to see its faintest movement, we must prepare for it by forming the mould into which we desire it should be cast.

Parents and teachers would do well to consider this. We marvel at the eccentricities of the young in the present day. We learn almost to dread the enthusiasm of devotional feeling. We see that it leads to differences of opinion and of action; that it breaks up the unity of families, and exhibits itself in peculiarities which are offensive to our sober judgment. We are almost inclined to think that the old ways of our forefathers were the best; that if

the young in those bygone ages were not so earnest as they are now, yet at least they were not so troublesome.

But who is to blame? We let our children grow up in ignorance. We do not teach them (probably because we do not know ourselves) what are the grounds of their faith; why they believe the Bible; why they belong to one Church rather than another. We think that they will learn these things intuitively. We have a vague idea that the knowledge of them is, in some way, imbibed with the repetition of the Collects, and Psalms, and Catechism. We are perhaps members of the English Church ourselves: our ancestors were so, and we have followed them, and our children, no doubt, will follow us. Or, it may be, we take delight in Church services, and the children like to help us in Church decoration. They understand all about Saints' Days and Festivals—perhaps even they may be learned in Black Letter Saints, and chant the Gregorian tones wonderfully! "Of course," we say to ourselves, "these things will attach them to the Church."

Now, all this is great folly. Collects and Psalms teach us how to pray, but they do not tell us why we should pray. The Catechism instructs us what we are to believe, but it does not give the grounds of belief; and Church festivals and music are very attractive, but the existence of the Church does not rest upon them. This reckoning upon a foundation where none had been provided is by no means unusual in other cases. There is a peculiar kind of mud, common in some parts of England, and known by the name of "blue" slipper, which, when it hardens, is supposed to

be as substantial as solid rock. And in consequence of this supposition houses are built upon it, roads rest on it, and, in fact, it is made the foundation of every kind of superstructure, few suspecting that it is not perfectly safe. But the rain moistens it; springs from the hills work themselves into it; it becomes mud again; and, when completely saturated, it begins to slide;—at first slowly, with a scarcely perceptible motion; but still it moves, and by its movement the buildings erected upon it totter; and then the mud slips faster, and the buildings totter more alarmingly; until at length, by an accelerated impulse, the blue slipper not only slides, but rushes downwards, and the superstructure becomes a mass of ruins.

There are characters which, in like manner, rest upon moral blue slipper; there are families which are more or less built upon it: more than all, there is a religious faith—alas! is it not the faith of thousands in England at this moment?—which has no better foundation.

Devotional reverence for the Bible or the Church, merely as a matter of feeling, will never save any one from the snares of Rationalism, or the enticements of the varied forms of error. That which we believe in and reverence to-day, we may very probably—such is the infirmity of human nature—disregard to-morrow. What we have to learn ourselves, and to teach our children, is to give a reason for the faith that is in us; to know why we hold the Bible to be true; why we belong to the Church of which we profess ourselves members; and these reasons are to be found first in facts, chiefly historical, and external

to our consciousness. But in order to explain this witness to young people, we must understand it ourselves; we must read, and think, and not only feel. Now, reading and thinking are difficult to many persons, whilst feeling is easy. To say, I believe the Bible to be true, because it speaks to my heart, is a ready and all-sufficient argument for the individual who is conscious of the influence which the Bible exerts; but it is not an argument which will stand against the scoff of the unbeliever. Our Blessed Lord, when addressing the Jews, rested the claims of His mission upon external evidence. He appealed to His works, His miracles; and so also the truth of the Bible, and the authority of the Church to which we belong,—let it be what Church it may,—must be open to proof, drawn from external testimony, of a like kind with that which, in other cases, is constantly appealed to as the witness to fact.

The amount of evidence which we are at liberty to demand is another and a most important consideration; and one which ought specially to be brought before the minds of the young. We may be beyond the reach of sceptical temptation ourselves, (though who in these days can venture to make such an assertion?) but they are not. They will, in all probability, soon be induced to plunge into those mines of darkness, miscalled of wisdom, which are filled with the miasma of philosophic doubt. The torch of human reason which they bear with them as their guide may, at any moment, enkindle the vapour, and the flames which light up the obscurity will then but the more rapidly hurry them to their destruction. We cannot hinder them from under-

taking the venture, but we can provide them with a safety-lamp. We may so guard the torch that it shall never become an incendiary match; whilst we show them how to carry it, so that it may be a guide in the gloom; pointing out where they may venture to go, and what they may accept as reality, and what reject as imagination. In other and unmetaphorical words, we may prepare their minds with the arguments of sound thinkers and cautious theologians; and then when we send them forth into the world, instead of listening to every idle phantasy, they will calmly test the difficulties brought before them, and discover their fallacy, though they may not be always able to refute them.

An involuntary sigh arises as this thought is suggested. Who will take the trouble to read and think? Who will go back to the fountain head? Who will study Butler, and Hooker, and Bull, and Nicholson, and Sanderson, mastering intricate arguments, and translating obsolete expressions. Students of theology may, because they are obliged to do it—but women? It is an absurdity to expect it of them. They will read reviews, short essays; they will catch up what is said in conversation, and believe it till they hear something which sounds to them more plausible;—but study for themselves! how is it possible? They cannot get at these books, and if they could, they would not have the time to read them. As children in the schoolroom they were too young to understand them, and, indeed, they never heard their names. As young girls they were busy with music, drawing, history, and the "ologies,"

French accent and the German declensions. As young women they have balls and picnics, dinner and croquet parties; as married women they have the cares of a household, the claims of society, and the education of their children for this world;—for the same round of lessons and accomplishments, amusements and cares, through which they have themselves passed! How, in the midst of such pressing present pursuits, can leisure be found for laying the foundation of faith?

And yet the task would not prove so difficult if we would only attempt it. We are not called upon to make our children read all these books, or even to read them ourselves. One or two carefully studied, and thought over, would furnish us with invaluable assistance in conversing with young people, and understanding the perplexities which, we may be morally certain, will, sooner or later, arise in their minds. Butler's Analogy, and—if we wish for condensed information in a modern form—Wordsworth's "Theophilus Anglicanus," would, alone, do more to clear our own minds, and enable us to explain the grounds of our belief, than volumes of controversial pamphlets and newspaper essays. It is the art of reasoning, the power of perceiving fallacies, which young people want; and if we can give them this, with a certain amount of definite historical knowledge, they will hold what they do hold so firmly that we need have very little fear for them. And by degrees, as their intellects strengthen, and their interest in these subjects deepens, we may lead them to study such books for themselves. They will find it rather an effort, but if they have been early accustomed to

thought they will not shrink from it. There is a satisfactory sense of security afforded by sound reasoning and deep learning, which is appreciated even by those who cannot thoroughly master the arguments brought forward. Definiteness and authority have a vast power in this uncertain world. In them lies the attraction which leads hundreds to the Church of Rome; and the young, especially, cannot rest without their support. If they are not provided for them, they will seek for them; and in seeking in a wrong direction, possibly in a wrong spirit, in dependence upon their own understanding, and their own judgment, they must, almost necessarily, fall into error. But this support can only be given by forming, early, a mould for the religious spirit, and taking care that it shall be composed of historical facts, and sound, yet humble reasoning; united with the principles of reverence, obedience, and a sincere love of truth. If this mould is provided, then, when, through God's mercy, the *feeling* of religion shall spring up into consciousness — as assuredly under the light of a consistent example it will—we shall find that it will, naturally, and without effort, develop itself in the form prepared for it, and in that form will deepen and intensify;—silently, without doubt or controversy; and, above all, without any of that bitterness which makes a self-chosen creed, and an adopted Church, too often synonymous with uncharitableness and narrowness.

And this must be the system of our religious education. For it is a system, inasmuch as it deals with definite aims, and works with definite instruments. Members of the English Church will desire

to see their children grow up in that Church. It is to them that the advice, proffered by one who is blest in belonging to the same Communion, must necessarily be addressed. But the principle put forward is universal. In order to be firm in the faith ourselves, and to bring up our children in a like stability of religious belief, we must understand the ground upon which we stand; and determine the limits within which human reason may safely be trusted, and an independent judgment be exercised.

It is more important than any knowledge connected with this world. We may be content to leave our children ignorant of geology, and botany, and chemistry; we may even give up the cherished hope of hearing them speak French with a Parisian accent, and discuss the merits of Goethe in his own tongue; but if we leave them ignorant and uncertain as regards the foundation of their religious belief, there may come a day,—possibly it may not be far distant,—when the cry of the human soul as it stands upon the brink of Eternity, and demands why it is to believe what it has heard concerning that Eternity, will startle us with an appeal which will close our ears to the claims of all other knowledge.

If it should ever be our lot to hear such a cry, and to feel that it is too late to attempt to answer it, we shall then learn to estimate the value of the inquiry. If we should ever know what it is to watch a young mind,—strong in its natural powers, eager in its self-confidence, yet subject to the influence of a weakened and agonized body,—looking forth from the bed of death, longing for certainty, but owning no authority except its own reason, no guide except its

own feeling, we shall then own how important,—how infinitely important,—it is, to clear away the mists from the judgment, before that hour of trial shall arrive;—before the evening shadows close around, and the night cometh in which man cannot think, even as he cannot work.

Still more fully, perhaps, shall we comprehend it, if it has been our privilege to minister to the young and the dying who have never known doubt, because they have always been taught to recognize the true ground of certainty.

We may have been called upon to mark the sudden decay of a young and beautiful life;—the rapid downward steps of disease, the rush that it makes towards Death; and we may have trembled in anticipation of the possible suggestions and uncertainties as to Divine truth, which in some hour of weakness may shake the faith that would fain rest wholly on its Saviour. But we have no cause to fear. The heart trusts then, because it has always trusted. It believes, because it knows that it has ground for belief. Its habit has been that of quiet conviction; the grasp of certain truths to which it may cling, even were the universe crumbling around it; and the shock of Death cannot now disturb it. Though the bodily frame may be daily weakened, and the affections may at times be troubled, and the brain for a moment confused; the inward abiding stay remains still untouched. And at the last, when Death is very near, perhaps God will permit us to witness its full power, in a sudden development of spiritual life,—of love, and faith, and hope,—which would seem the foretaste of the great change that shall convert the earthly

into the Heavenly, and clothe the mortal with Immortality.

Or again, there may be no sudden change,—only the gradual fading away, the dying out of the old life, and the gradual dawning of the new. There may be little pain, no fear,—but rather, calm hope gradually brightening into joy; obedience, which uses thankfully the aids offered it, because it has always been taught to value them as means of grace and blessing; an untroubled imagination, which pictures death as "a sleep from which it shall wake up dazzled;" and a faith which rests upon the Redeemer, because the young heart, with all its consciousness of sinfulness, has no thought that it can go to any but Him, and longs that "He, rather than the angels, should come to bear the soul away, because with Him it would feel more safe."

Very beautiful, unutterably comforting, is such a deathbed!—even though there may be bodily suffering and weariness before the spirit is permitted to return to its God. The Lord has been "the shepherd," feeding the soul with His truth, "so that it should not want." He has made the awakening intellect to lie down in "green pastures," even the rest of a firm conviction; and now He calls the young spirit to Himself, that He may "lead it beside the still waters"—the rivers that gladden the Paradise of His Redeemed.

These are no fictions. They are not ideal pictures. They are facts, truths, Eternal Realities. The well-grounded faith of life is the preparation for the calm trust in Death. There is an abiding objective truth; and apart from it, truth which is subjective can never

expect to stand against the temptations of a scoffing world. God has united them, and we may not dare to separate them.

And the teaching of this objective truth is put in our power; whilst the implanting and growth of subjective truth is dependent upon the working of God's Spirit. We can instruct children in the evidence upon which faith in their Redeemer is built; but we cannot make them recognize its Divine origin, from the effects which it produces in themselves, until, through God's grace, the principle of faith is awakened in their hearts.

Yet it is necessary to guard these statements from misapprehension. It is not for one moment meant that an acquaintance with the grounds of faith constitutes saving faith, or that salvation depends upon such knowledge. Thousands, we may fully believe, will hereafter enter Heaven who have never even known what is meant by the grounds of faith; thousands who have loved their Saviour, and worshipped in humility, according to the fashion of their forefathers, without being able to give any answer to the question,—why they believe the Bible, and why they submit themselves to the Church.

But it is equally true that such inquiries are rife in these days; that they will, in all probability, meet our children in their after life; and that the fact of being unable to answer them may involve danger to the faith by which they are to be saved.

And it is also true, that these subjects, when taken up heartily and thoroughly understood, give a feeling of stability to the whole system of religion which acts upon the moral character—sobers and

strengthens it in life; and is, through God's mercy, the means of guarding it against the temptations of Satan in the hour of death.

And for that higher, more spiritual teaching, for which we so earnestly long, we must look to the working of God's Spirit, and His blessing upon our fervent prayers and our consistent example. Young people *feel* earnestness and sincerity more quickly than they feel any other qualities; and they will respond to them involuntarily and unconsciously. People talk as if the minds of children were naturally antagonistic to religion. It is not so. None who have been conversant with the education of children, and have put their hearts into the teaching they have given, will ever make such a statement. If children dislike religion, it is because they are teased with it. It is thrust upon them at unseasonable moments, or presented under a form which strikes them as affected or unreal, or awakens their sense of the ludicrous.

God made the child's heart for Himself, and He will win it, if we will not mar His work by our impatient folly.

What is really wonderful to those who watch the development of a young mind under definite, consistent, religious teaching and example, is not how great a dislike exists to religion, but how readily the heart is awakened to it,—how instinctive the longing for it is,—how soon it acts as a powerful principle. The interest which a child takes in conversation upon serious subjects—upon matters affecting the conscience and practice, or even what may seem abstruse doctrines—is the deepest reproach to the

so-called intellectual man of the world. He is spending his time in searching for pebbles, whilst the little one whom he despises is gathering diamonds. It is the young in whose minds

> "——— those truths do rest,
> Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
> In darkness lost—the darkness of the grave." [1]

The one thing which we have to guard against is the permitting shadows of religion to be mistaken for religion itself.

Feeling is very apt to deceive young people upon this point, and there is a time when they are especially exposed to the temptation—the time of their Confirmation and first Communion. A child brought up carefully and religiously in the English Church is taught, and very rightly, to look forward to this period as a most important one; as giving a fresh starting point; and when it arrives, there is a good deal of excitement mixed up with the solemn duties of preparation. Peculiar earnestness of feeling is likely to be aroused both in those who instruct and those who are taught, and the result is the growth of religious feeling. God forbid that any disparaging words should be uttered of such influences—much more that the benefits of Christ's ordinances, and the vast efficacy of His sacramental grace, should be for an instant doubted. But we shall be grievously disappointed if we suppose that any amount of feeling, awakened under peculiar circumstances, is a sure indication that the heart has been touched abidingly. In conversing with young people at such times, it is

[1] Wordsworth.

necessary to prepare them for the reaction which will almost inevitably follow the luxury of devotional excitement. Steady, even hard reading, and stern, practical tests of principle, require to be enforced at these times more than at any other; and if we see that the character does not stand this test, that there is a shrinking from little hardships and self-denial, though there may be very real compunction for past offences, very true faith, and earnest resolution, we may be perfectly sure that disappointment is in store for us. The mind has not yet grasped the fact that the full meaning of self-dedication is self-crucifixion. The heart has not yet given a *whole will* to God, and the course of the Christian life will probably be, even for years, fluctuating, feeble, uncertain.

We must be very patient, very gentle, with such weakness. It will never do to interfere too much. We shall only give an unreal stimulus by constant reminders, warnings, expostulations. The young soon learn to lean upon false supports. After a grave conversation the heart is softened, and new resolutions are made, and feeling is, as before, unconsciously mistaken for duty. We are all more or less liable to this mistake. Grown-up people are in the habit of bringing themselves up before the tribunal of their own hearts, confessing and sorrowing, and giving themselves absolution upon the strength of their penitence; and then going away and offending again; and when this confession is made by a young person to a tender and sympathizing human friend, the feeling of sorrow is assisted and encouraged, and the sense of the imaginary absolution is intensified; and so at length the

mind learns to rest upon these seasons of better feeling, and to make them, as it were, a balance against the faults committed through weakness at other times.

In such cases, what is needed is that the character should be allowed to develop by itself; that the young heart should be left, if it must be so, to err, and to suffer from the error for a time, so that it may fully realize its own instability; and then suddenly be roused by an expostulation which will show plainly how far from the right path it has wandered.

So, again, fashions in religion are most delusive. Young people think themselves religious because they like daily services, accompanied with beautiful music; or because they listen with pleasure to a stirring sermon, or take an interest in Church matters, and are fond of the village school-children. They do so just as their elders suppose that to enter eagerly into controversy implies a liking for religion; and that to criticize every service which does not come up to their own standard implies reverence. It does not do to be always preaching either to old or young upon these subjects, still less to cry them down, for they are no doubt important, and may be made real tests of right feeling; but it is very needful to show how entirely distinct and apart religion itself is from these adventitious circumstances. And more especially is it essential to watch against that form of feminine romance which Sir James Stephen so happily characterizes as "hieropathy," and which, if allowed to get the upper hand, will convert the solemnities of religion into the incentives to vanity and self-deceit.

And perfect simplicity and earnestness are above all things needful, as the basis of true charity. "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"[1] these are the things against which "there is no law." They may be found amongst all those who profess and call themselves Christians, and where they exist we are bound to recognize and honour them. Once lay firmly this broad foundation, and then we may, without danger, build upon it the edifice which we believe ourselves to be truth. For to admit that others think themselves to be right, and to honour them for sincerely acting upon their convictions, does not in the least imply that we do not consider them wrong; or that we are willing to yield one iota of the truth which we ourselves hold. We may be as steadfast as we will in supporting the purity of the faith,—and the more steadfast the more acceptable in God's sight,—only, we may not venture to speak harshly of those who differ from us. We condemn their opinions, but themselves we leave to the judgment of our common Master.

This is the most difficult lesson of all to teach young people. They cannot see the distinction between conscientious and wilful error, so they are intolerant; and when they do see it, they are in danger of falling into the opposite mistake, and forgetting that we are all answerable for the right regulation of conscience, and therefore if we fail to use all the means in our power for enlightening it, we are guilty of a moral offence, though conscience itself may never raise its voice to warn us of it. Considerations like these

[1] Galatians v. 22, 23.

are too abstruse for the young. They will never, or very rarely, work them out for themselves. Their warm feelings make them zealous, their ignorance makes them narrow-minded. If they have any religion at all, it is almost always sure to take a sectarian form; meaning by sectarianism that circumscribed view of Christianity which cannot separate truth from the error with which it is mingled; or recognize it under any form but that in which it has been presented to itself. The dogmatic liberality which makes a creed of scepticism, and would scornfully persecute all who decline to accept it, belongs to a more advanced period of life.

But there is no way of enforcing this charitable judgment, combined with the strict maintenance of truth,—there is no way, indeed, of enforcing any Christian practice or virtue,—except by exhibiting it in ourselves. Education is example. It is so in religion even more than in anything else, for religious influence is the action of heart upon heart. It is, indeed, but another word for God's grace. That sacred motive power which urges us forward will, sooner or later, through a blessing upon our instrumentality, urge forward others. All that we have to do is to put no obstacles in the way.

We wonder that our children are not religious, but are we so ourselves? Or if our hearts are really given to God, are we consistent in our practice? Have we always been so? May not the coldness we now deplore in these young creatures, in whom our affections are centred, be the working out of some of our own errors in former days? Even if the latter should be the case, there is no cause for despondency.

God is pleased to work in His Providence according to natural laws. As we sow, so shall we reap; and we are gathering now the fruits of our former folly. But there is no moment in this life in which we may not sow the seed of salvation with one hand, even whilst we are reaping the results of the seed of corruption with the other.

What has been done or left undone is, indeed, beyond recall; but the prayers, the love, the patience, the consistent example of holiness, which are to-day in our power, may be committed to God's keeping, in the full confidence that even if not permitted to gather their reward on earth, in the present conversion of the children we love, it will be ours in the great To-morrow of Eternity, when we shall be permitted to recognize the fulfilment of that enduring promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

CHAPTER XI.

SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE PUPILS.

And now, alas!—may it not be said?—how unsatisfactory is all this! So many words used, but so little help given!

Principles! the world is weary of principles. What it wants is practice; rules, illustrations, definite landmarks. We all know what right principles are. The necessity of speaking truth and being obedient, is a necessity which dates from the Creation. The difficulties connected with intellectual instruction are the real stumbling-blocks in the way of good education. Who in these days cares for the fact that a little girl has never been known to disobey, or to tell a lie, when she is so dull that she cannot repeat the dates of the French kings, or state when Newfoundland was discovered?

And besides,—the advice which has been given has been addressed to mothers; and the young girls of the present age are placed under the care of governesses, at home, or at school, as the case may be. Why is not some help given to these unfortunate foster-parents, who, without any of the happiness, have all the labour, and a great share of the anxiety, of mothers?

This latter complaint is natural, and in one sense just. A great portion of what has previously been said has been uttered under a supposition, which experience proves to be in England untrue, namely, that daughters are brought up by their mothers. But the advantage of principles, as opposed to systems and rules, is, that they are suited for all ages, seasons, and circumstances. They may be carried out by the governess as well as by the parent; and as we have not yet arrived at the acknowledgment that mothers can lawfully delegate their whole responsibility to others, so we are compelled to address them as if they were in all cases willing to undertake it.

Or, it may also be said,—education is distinct from instruction. The former—the training of the heart—belongs to the parent; the latter—the training of the intellect—to the governess. A book which treats upon education must, therefore, necessarily be written for mothers. But there is a fallacy in this assertion.

It is quite true that education and instruction are distinct, the one from the other. Education, is carried on by moral influence, exercised in the various modes which are furnished by the events of life. Instruction, is definite information or teaching, given upon particular subjects. We do not always know when we are educating, but we cannot be doubtful as to when we are instructing. But when we say that education and instruction are so distinct, as to be capable of entire separation, we fall into very serious error. We may, indeed, educate, without attempting to instruct; but it is

impossible to instruct, without, at the same time, educating.

Every teacher, every master, admitted into a family, assists in the education of the children. It is a consequence not to be avoided. No lesson, however dry and commonplace, can be given, without the exertion of a moral influence. Much more must this influence be exercised, when the lessons are given by some one person daily; and when this same person must be the constant companion, guide, and referee of the young mind, committed to her charge.

This is a very grave thought, especially when we consider what, in so many cases, these teachers and governesses are;—how young and inexperienced, even when they are most excellent in their efforts and intentions.

It might, however, be, in a degree, a help to themselves, if they would fully face the fact, and prepare themselves for it. It would make their task much more arduous, but it would also make it infinitely more noble. They cannot be called upon simply to impart so much knowledge of French and History, since they must, in the very act, impart principles of self-command, patience, sympathy, gentleness, or the reverse. For these qualities are necessarily exhibited in the mode in which instruction is carried on; and every exhibition of a moral quality in ourselves, tends to impress it upon the mind with which, at the moment, we are brought into connection. All teachers—more especially those peculiarly termed governesses—have, therefore, very high influential positions in God's world.

But, it is said, they are dependent. They are earning their own bread, and are, in various ways, subject to human caprice.

Very true. Acknowledge it. An unpleasant truth is always less disagreeable when we have grasped it. And when it has been acknowledged, let it be held firmly, and let the world be confronted with it. We need have no fear, the world is a great coward. It will always run away from those who look at it courageously.

"Yes. I am a governess; earning my own livelihood; dependent, in so far that I have certain duties to perform, for which I am paid. But my work is not the less God's work, because I receive payment from man. The Rector of a parish is not the less Christ's Minister, because he receives tithes. God appointed the circumstances of my lot. He ordained that I should have no means of living, except by labour; and in that very Providential arrangement of my life, He showed me what I have to do for Him. It is a great work, and I thank Him for it. My friends think I am lowered in social position, and they are correct. According to the world's estimate, I am lowered, and I am willing to be so. I should be admired if I worked gratuitously. I should be thought a saint and a heroine. But work for God can only be undertaken in the form in which He sees fit to give it. He will not value me the less because I perform two tasks instead of one; because, whilst working for His little ones, I also provide for my own maintenance, and perhaps help a mother, or a sister who cannot help herself. I accept, therefore, the world's commiseration, with the amount of gratitude

which is due to it. It is meant kindly, but I do not need it. I take the materials of my life as God has given them, and do with them the best I can for His service. The prince upon his throne, the statesman in the senate, the philosopher in his closet, can do no more. I am content."

The world would smile were such a speech as this made to it. It would whisper of enthusiasm, romance—perhaps bring forward an accusation of pride; and it would watch for a while, suspiciously; and at last it would turn away in perplexity,—but with respect.

And when the world's respect has been won, we can well afford to disregard its wondering smile! There is one pride, and one pride only, which is justifiable, because it is consistent with the deepest humility. To be God's special servant, His instrument for any particular purpose, is the highest dignity to which the human being can attain; and no one undertakes the education of a child without being raised to it.

Only one condition is required. The task must be fulfilled cheerfully, willingly;—not, indeed, always without a struggle, because human nature soon becomes weary, and longs for rest; and the heart is weak, and will at times sigh for the enjoyments of freedom and luxury;—but, nevertheless, with an entire subjugation of these inferior desires, and with a thankful sense of the infinite privilege of working in a definite manner for God.

And, now, what is the real state of the case as regards governesses, whether in private families, or in schools? What is the view which they themselves

take of their own position, and which, therefore, they assist to form in the minds of others? For it must be remembered, as a general rule, that the world will place us on that level on which we place ourselves. It will do so often very absurdly. But the fact is true, and those who watch the course of life cannot fail to remark it. If governesses are looked down upon, it is because they look down upon themselves: because they cannot, in the slightest degree, grasp the greatness of their duties.

They deem themselves victims to misfortune, and regard the world as their enemy. They think a great deal of social position, and are always guarding their dignity. So they meet the world upon its own ground, and are of course judged by the world's judgment. Directly or indirectly, they are told that the place they wish to take is not that to which they have a right. They turn away offended, and show their annoyance by moodiness and unhappiness. Of course their employment becomes irksome to them; and—what is worse—the children given to their charge are regarded as the instruments of their suffering. But for their pupils, the world would treat them with respect; and the thought causes a fretting irritation, which makes the presence of the pupils a trial, and the very mention of them a source of annoyance.

Now, what is there noble in all this? What is there of the spirit which works for God voluntarily, thankfully? Allowing that it is natural, yet is it not petty and ungrateful? Can we think that God will acknowledge as done for Him that work which is only done because without it we must starve?

And does not the world recognize the meanness of the spirit? Do not the children feel it? If the governess works only because she is obliged to do so, and reckons the worth of her services at so much per annum, will they not take her at her own estimation? will they not look upon her instruction merely as so much teaching given in return for value received?

The question is one to be answered by all persons who undertake the duty of education as a profession.

According to the spirit in which we work, so will be the value put upon that work. Labour for the world, and the world will put its own price upon us —history so much, languages so much, accomplishments so much. An accurate valuation to be made in gold—and in nothing more. Labour for God, and no matter what we receive—be it little or much, according to the capabilities which God has given us for our vocation—there is one talent the value of which is priceless; the influence of a noble, disinterested, religious mind, which accepts its place in the world with indifference because it has a place in the vineyard of God. And we may be assured that, let the world strive as it may to undervalue this talent, it will in the end be compelled to estimate it at its true worth.

It is, indeed, vain to insist upon the necessity of right principles of education—to explain and enforce them—so long as the persons who are to carry them out are themselves devoid of the very elementary principle which forms the foundation of all lasting religious influences. Children are not educated by the *act* of instruction, but by the *spirit* of instruction.

If we look upon them merely as so many instruments for gaining money in an unpleasant way, we may talk to them like Angels, and they will receive our lessons and repeat them, and then turn away and do precisely contrary to them.

It is not, indeed, requisite that all persons who undertake to be governesses should delight in the act of teaching, or rejoice in the anxiety inseparable from the charge of young people. A clergyman does not necessarily like visiting the poor, or superintending a Sunday School; but what he does—if he is really in earnest—is to put a noble spirit into his work; to like it, not in itself, but because it is done for God.

And when once this spirit possesses the heart, all worldly considerations—even those which concern that most difficult subject of pecuniary remuneration—will soon assume their right proportion. It may be desirable to enter into this point more particularly. The same Master who appoints the work gives it to us also under certain conditions. In the case under consideration it is to be work done for His glory, but also for an earthly maintenance. Prudence, forethought, a due self-estimation, are therefore as necessary as earnestness and industry. If persons have pupils in their own house, they are not at liberty to indulge in speculations, and experiments, and lavishness. Supposing they had money at command and could work—voluntarily, as it is called—such things might be allowable; but God has placed them under certain restraints, and they must submit themselves to them. Every one understands this. Children understand it. No child when sent away from home for education

expects to find the same luxuries which are to be met with in her father's house; because, as society now exists, the act of taking pupils is a confession of being, in a certain sense, poor. But there are some things which children require, even if they do not expect them—liberality, refinement, propriety, and that amount of care for their physical well-being which shall make them comfortable, and teach them how to observe the niceties and decorums essential for their after life. These things are just as much a part of good education as instruction in moral duties, and far more so than the teaching of languages and accomplishments. Are they cared for as they ought to be by all who receive pupils into their own houses? If they are not, what must be the result?

Whether the effect of crowding young girls together in one bedroom, giving them no means of privacy, stinting them in the time necessary for their toilette, summoning them to hasty ill-appointed meals, and hiring inferior servants to wait upon them—can be compensated for by any amount of first-rate masters, or any quantity of "classes" for imbibing science and history, may be proved by the tone and style usually known as that of a school-girl. It is not the *learning* together which makes girls school-girlish; it is the *living* together; the being herded like animals in one fold;—the sense of sham and pretence, the fact that the decencies of life are disregarded in the bedroom, though there may be damask and ormolu in the drawing-room. No child thinks the less of the governess who says, "My dear, I cannot afford to give you such or such indulgences," but every child despises the effort to con-

ceal economy by false appearances. And this disgust will develop itself into secret contempt. The slightest taint of meanness or unreality will utterly destroy children's respect. They are very severe judges, and they cannot make the allowances which their elders can. They do not know the pressure of poverty which lies behind the outward show of affluence. They are aware that their parents give a certain sum for their education, and they feel that for this sum they have a right to expect certain comforts. They can tell nothing of the outlay required before a school can be opened; or of the family claims which carry away what might otherwise be profit. If they did, they might be more merciful to shabby economy; or, in other words, economy which is ashamed to confess itself what it is; but they would never respect it: it is not a thing to be respected. Poverty may be honourable; truth must always be so; but pretence is and ever must be despicable. And unless a child respects her governess, she will deceive her. There lies the great evil of inferior schools. Deceit is not taught, but it is imbibed: it exists in the atmosphere; and upon deceit will follow a train of unnumbered, unutterable evils.

School-girl tricks, a school-girl tone, are accepted by many persons as belonging to a certain age, but as being sure to pass away with that age. It is a great mistake. The school-girl tone is low, untrue, irreverent: it is based upon the belief that education is a mere matter of bargaining; and that as the governess desires to make the most for herself in money, so the pupils may make the most for themselves in what they call fun, or, more truly, deceit. And it will last long

after the period of school life is over. It will exhibit itself in an outward polish of manner, but no ease; a flimsy show of accomplishments, and very little information; a flippant tone of conceit, and a weak judgment; an intense secret worldliness, combined with the newest fashion in religion. It is not only essentially "of the earth, earthy;" but it implies the lowest kind of earthliness. And let the instruction given in a school be what it may—let the scriptural instruction be orthodox, the precepts of morality pure, the French and German teachers unwearied, the music master first-rate—this will be the result of school education, so long as the pecuniary profit is the first subject of consideration, and mean economies are practised in order to save money.

And yet pecuniary profit must be a consideration; the very existence of a school implies that it is.

Undoubtedly.—But let it be avowed to the parents, not exhibited to the children.

If young people, not members of the family, are to be brought up in the habits of cultivated society, they must be accustomed to comforts and refinements. If they are to learn what is meant by Christian liberality, thoughtfulness for their equals, consideration for the needy, these virtues must be exhibited before them. And if the governess does not ask a sufficiently large sum to pay the expenses of her household, and to leave a surplus for other claims, she cannot teach them these important lessons; and she is almost inevitably induced to make economy her first object, and the well-being of the children her second. She cannot give them separate rooms,

because that involves taking a larger house, and house-rent is ruinous. She cannot even fit up the rooms she has, comfortably, so as to ensure privacy, because this involves buying new furniture, and making other arrangements which cost money. She cannot give them a good dinner, because that necessitates a good cook; and good cooks demand high wages. She cannot have a well-appointed table, with sufficient attendance; because that again requires well-trained servants, who will expect liberal remuneration. And with all her care, her own future needs meet her at every turn. How is she to provide for them?

Numbers. That is the secret. Boys are congregated together by hundreds, and head masters are said to make wonderful fortunes. Why may it not be the same with girls? One thing is certain, that no one ever made money—according to the usual acceptation of the phrase—by taking a few private pupils. It is possible in this way to live, and to live in comfort; but to save largely is out of the question. So it is that the cry for cheap schools is followed by the establishment of large schools; and with a large school set up for the purpose of making money, there must necessarily be associated the hateful school-girl tone.

And the remedy? It lies far back, and is very difficult of attainment, for it rests with no less than three parties. First, and most obviously, with the governess. A person who undertakes to educate, cannot conscientiously make money a first object, however much it may be needed. When we have to deal with immortal souls, everything which exercises

an influence upon those souls becomes of primary importance. If therefore privacy, refinement, personal comfort—a thing perfectly distinct from luxury,—and that general sense of ease and liberality which cannot fail to be associated with a well-ordered household, are means of influence—as undoubtedly they are—then must these things be provided before any attempt is made to save. To ask a small sum from the parents, and to make it go as far as a large one, by stinting the children in regard to those necessaries of life which must tend to form their characters, and give them the habits and tastes of ladies, is deceit of the worst kind.

And still further,—if the fact of herding young girls together in numbers—even when liberality is practised—involves any absence of provision for delicacy and modesty; if it renders it impossible for the governess to give them individual attention; and necessitates leaving them to inferior teachers, and indiscriminate companionship; and neglecting the personal superintendence, which is the only means of gaining a real influence over them, then must the idea of making money by numbers be relinquished. It is a question for each person's conscience. The ill effects of congregating girls in numbers may not be evident to all. There may be some who see, or think they see, means by which it may be avoided. It is only the principle which is here insisted upon. Education is a religious task. It must be undertaken in a religious spirit. The fact of being paid for it, and of needing that payment as a means of subsistence, does not, in the very slightest degree, lessen

its responsibility, or release those who undertake it from the obligation of consulting, first, before any private advantage, the moral well-being of their pupils.

But does this mean that large private schools, low terms, and good education for girls, are as a rule incompatible? Perhaps it does. Perhaps it would be better for the community at large if the fact were acknowledged.

Certainly it would be much safer for parents. They would not then be tempted by cheap schools, in which the deficiencies of quality are to be made up by quantity. And it would certainly be happier for the governess, who must often be sorely tried, whilst endeavouring to satisfy her conscience, without giving up her object.

When we have no anticipations, we have no disappointments. It is the "hope deferred" which "maketh the heart sick." We shall do better without any hope, than with one which is exaggerated. To limit the number of pupils, and to give them all which is essential for their education in refined habits, will probably leave only a small surplus for what may be termed profits. And personal claims may be many and heavy; and sickness and age may be looming in the distance; and when men can summon boys together by hundreds, and after a few years' labour retire with a fortune, why—it may be asked—should not women be permitted to do the same with girls; instead of being called upon to labour for many years, and retire with only a bare maintenance?

The answer may be very distasteful. But what are we to do if nature and experience tell us that this gregarious education for girls is injurious?

The aim of education is to fit children for the position in life which they are hereafter to occupy. Boys are to be sent out into the world to buffet with its temptations, to mingle with bad and good, to govern and direct. The school is the type of the life they are hereafter to lead. Girls are to dwell in quiet homes, amongst a few friends; to exercise a noiseless influence, to be submissive and retiring. There is no connection between the bustling mill-wheel life of a large school and that for which they are supposed to be preparing. This alone is a sufficient reason for supposing, even on a cursory glance, that to educate girls in crowds is to educate them wrongly.

But there are other objections even more important, though perhaps less obvious.

A boy's mind is not so easily sullied as a girl's. Indiscriminate companionship may with the former have an injurious effect for the time, but it does not leave the same lasting stain as with the latter. Undesirable knowledge is not an equal shock to the moral nature. If a girl's natural delicacy and modesty are wounded by intercourse with those who have learnt evil, of which she has hitherto been ignorant, the scars of the wound remain for years, and the conversation of one hour will leave its stamp upon the memory for life. And so also the spirit of independence and determination, the conflict of opinion, the roughnesses even of a large school, are congenial to a boy's nature, they are utterly opposed to that of a girl. There is

an element of good in these things, but when applied to girls the evil preponderates. Strong-minded, or, in other words, masculine women, are no doubt useful in their generation; but we may well desire to be delivered from them as a race. And yet further,—there is amongst boys, especially at public schools, a recognition of the world's opinion, a traditionary honour which acts as a check to the pettiness, the deceit, and frivolity that too often characterize assemblies of girls. Boys sin more openly, but less meanly than girls; and because their offences are open, they are more easily known and punished, and have less enduring consequences. Girls in a large school may for months carry on a course of deceit which may injure them for life, and no one will be the wiser. These considerations alone may be sufficient to show that the objection to crowding girls together in large schools is founded upon common sense and experience. Many other evils might be adduced, but public opinion, though in this case often exhibited in the form of prejudice which can give no reason for its decision, is for the most part enlisted on the same side; and therefore the subject does not need to be enforced further. The best that can be said for the opposite view of the question is, that large schools are generally cheaper than those with limited numbers; and that it is hard that women, who have to labour in the arduous vocation of teaching, should not make a full profit by it.

Even so; it is hard, in the worldly sense: but it is not hard in any other sense, because it is in accordance with the dispensations of God. His Providence works by general laws, and according to those laws

women are not meant to stand alone, but are made dependent upon men. Exceptions to a law cannot be judged by the same reasoning which is applied to the law itself. They must always press hardly, and therefore it is that women who undertake the task of education require above all things to put their work upon the very highest religious grounds. If they undertake it in the hope of really making money, they will in all probability either be tempted to sacrifice the good of their pupils for the attainment of their purpose, or they will labour in a liberal and conscientious spirit for years, only to sink at last under the disappointment of unfounded expectations.

Surely it is better far to face the truth at once—to look upon education as a profession in which persons are especially appointed to labour for God's service, so long as He gives the power; and by means of which He wills not that they should make a fortune and then live at ease, but simply be provided for when He takes away those powers.

To collect as many children as we can possibly crowd together,—to summon masters and mistresses around us, and with their aid to carry on a whirling dance through the circle of sciences and accomplishments supposed necessary for a finishing education,—and at the end of a few years, to pause breathless, and exclaim, "Thank God, it is over; I have made so many thousand pounds, and now I am free!" may be very natural, but it is certainly not very elevated. And should the dance be continued through many years, and no thousands be forthcoming at the

end, then must it be owned to be bitterly disappointing; whilst under any circumstances, if higher considerations are taken into account, the retrospect of such an earthly aim can scarcely fail to produce keen self-reproach.

CHAPTER XII.

SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE PUPILS—(*continued*).

We have seen that it is incumbent upon those who receive pupils to look at the facts of life bravely; to make pecuniary advantage a thoroughly secondary object, and to put their work before them in its highest point of view; but assuredly if this be so, parents are no less called upon to regard education as a good for which they must be willing and prepared to make sacrifices.

Many—all, indeed, who have their children's true interest at heart—do so; but they would, perhaps, be more satisfied if they would sometimes, in imagination, change places with those who have the responsibility and expense of education, and ask how they could themselves have managed, if placed in a similar position. Persons at whose call money has always been ready, do not in the least understand what it is to set up a house without money—to begin life with a burden, and to struggle for years, and still to be apparently no nearer the moment of release. It is not the yearly expenditure which presses upon the majority of women who undertake a school, but that which must be incurred before a single pupil can be received. Education is and must be expensive so

long as it is carried on as a speculation, though one which is perfectly honourable. If, therefore, parents dread the unavoidable evils which accompany crowding girls together in large numbers, and inuring them to shabby economies; they must not be surprised if they are told that smaller numbers, refinement, and liberality, are incompatible with low terms. They may be vexed to find it so, but they will do wisely to acknowledge it. As a general rule no education at all at home, is better than that of a large boarding-school, where money is a matter of primary importance. And when parents become convinced of this, and refuse to sacrifice their children's highest interests by supporting them,—some other means of cheap education will, it cannot be doubted, be found.

We have learnt to despise day schools; they are looked upon as plebeian, and, unquestionably, there are serious disadvantages connected with them. Yet, upon consideration, we may, perhaps, come to the conclusion, that the bad effects of promiscuous association for a few hours in the day, and for a special purpose, are not likely to be as great as an almost equally promiscuous companionship—not only at certain times, for certain purposes, but throughout the whole day—during seasons of recreation, and even by night. Children will not learn good manners at a day school; but will they learn them at a large boarding school? If a governess at home is, for any reason, undesirable,—if careful education, with small numbers, is found too expensive,—it might, possibly, be worth the trial whether a very superior day school, established in a locality which provides good masters, might not be carried on with sufficient pecuniary

profit to the governess, and with greater intellectual advantages, and much less risk to the children, than that which attends the present system of herding them together in one house. There would be a good deal of prejudice to contend against at first, and especially the fear of indiscriminate companionship, which is so objectionable to our English feeling. But it must be remembered that we are only considering a question of comparative evils. And such a school as is here intended would not profess to be a cheap school, so as to hold out attractions to persons of really inferior social position. Five-and-twenty pounds a year would be considered very expensive for a day school; but for that sum a thoroughly well educated, clever, and high principled woman, might take the superintendence of twenty children, provide most efficient assistance, live herself in comfort, and make a yearly provision for the needs of illness and old age. If she had to make a home for them, and were to ask forty instead of five-and-twenty pounds, she would be compelled to take an expensive house, and so to burden herself with debt at the outset; to crowd the children in a way which would be utterly demoralizing; to stint them of everything but bare necessaries; and to obtain the cheapest assistance of whatever kind it might be; and at the end of the year she would, in all probability, find herself not only as far off as ever from a provision for the future, but actually with an increase of debt upon her shoulders.

Really superior women will not take these risks, much less will they sacrifice the good of their pupils for their own profit. Cheap schools, therefore, must

fall into the hands of an inferior class. Now, it is for parents to consider which is the best: to give their children the advantage of thoroughly good teaching for a few hours in the day, undertaking themselves the responsibility and expense of their home life; or to give them very inferior teaching, lowering influences, and education in unrefined habits; —only with the comfort of knowing that the children will be entirely off their hands for a certain number of months in the year. The idea here thrown out is merely a suggestion. It may not be found to answer, but the present state of female education in England certainly demands that some change should be made by which persons of small incomes who, from any cause, find it undesirable to educate their daughters at home, may be enabled to give them really good instruction, and not be compelled to have recourse to cheap boarding schools.

Perhaps if some such school were once established and supported, it would draw around it persons with small incomes in the same way as endowed grammar schools do. The daily instruction given at a grammar school will not compare with the training which a boy receives at Eton, Winchester, or Harrow, but it is unquestionably better than that of Dotheboys Hall.

Before, however, such a form of education can be adopted, parents must be prepared to make considerable sacrifices of time and personal comfort. A governess at home is a luxury, because she is always ready to do what the mother does not find it convenient to do. She may be young, inexperienced, ignorant—still she is the governess, and the children

can always be left with her. A child at a boarding school is still less of a charge, in fact she is no charge at all; the responsibility has been yielded to another, and, except in the holidays, there is no cause to be anxious about her.

But if young girls are to be absent only a few hours in the day, they must be their mother's companions at other times, or what is to be done with them? This is certainly a serious difficulty; but, upon consideration, it seems to have assumed its present proportions very much in consequence of a huge evil which has, almost unknown to ourselves, crept stealthily into our households, until it is gradually moulding the whole character and tone of the educated classes of the women of England.

Mothers and daughters live still in the same home, but they have ceased to live the same lives. The mother's home is the drawing-room, the child's home is the schoolroom; and when the mother goes into the schoolroom she is decidedly *de trop*, and when the child goes into the drawing-room she puts on her best frock, and assumes her company manners. Such an assertion as this is, indeed, very broad—a vast number of exceptions to it may be brought forward—but, nevertheless, it is most certainly the spirit of the English education of the present day. Mothers do too often devolve their duties upon others, and suffer a loss of affection and interest in consequence; and any kind of education which throws back upon them the daily charge of their young daughters will be likely to be felt as a burden. So long as this is the case, a boarding school, though inferior, will always carry away the

palm from a day school, though the instruction given in it may be of a first-rate character.

Parents therefore, as well as governesses, must be ready to do their part in education, if the training of English girls is to be improved. Those who can give but little for their children's instruction, must be willing to take a larger share of trouble of a different kind. But, beyond and before all this, there is a third mode by which the position of governesses of all kinds would be improved, and the cause of education advanced. It is very obvious —so obvious that the mention of it will, probably, provoke a smile—and yet it is often singularly overlooked.

Why is it that, in England, so many fathers in the professional ranks—from which the majority of governesses are taken—give little or no thought to their daughters' future maintenance, except so far as it may be secured by marriage?

A man, we will suppose, proposes to marry upon a comfortable income, dependent upon his own exertions. He is ready to make some small provision for his wife; perhaps sufficient for herself, but not in the least sufficient for the expenses of a family. The wife's relations are satisfied with this. The wife herself has, probably, no fortune, and, therefore, her prospects are for the present bettered by her marriage; and the husband's good professional income will, it is thought, allow of his saving enough for his children. So the marriage takes place, and for some years all goes well; the household is kept on a liberal scale; no comforts are denied to any one, and social claims are well at-

tended to. The boys are sent to a public school, and from thence to college. The girls are educated at home by a succession of governesses, aided by expensive masters. The father feels that he labours to make money, and thinks he is at liberty to enjoy it. His circumstances are affluent, and he has a right to live with all the luxuries and refinements of affluence. Suddenly he is taken ill; he is on his deathbed; he thinks of the future for his wife and children, and he is satisfied. He made a provision for his wife when he married, and women require but little; his boys are all placed in professions; his daughters will no doubt sooner or later marry. So, in regard to this one point, he dies happy.

But what is the true state of the case? There is a provision for the wife—just enough for her to live upon; but what is there for the daughters? The sum which was barely sufficient for one, how can it meet the expenses of four, or perhaps five? The daughters see this plainly. They cannot be dependent on their mother. There is but one thing to be done. They will take pupils. But this involves a large house—furnishing; the unnumbered expenses of a new establishment. Then comes borrowing, then debts and anxiety, and bitter disappointment. They begin life penniless, and in all probability they will end it penniless.

And this is taking a better case than usual. In very many instances, women of the educated classes, who are forced to labour for themselves, have nothing at all to fall back upon; there is not even a provision for their mother. It is impossible for them, if they

receive pupils into their own homes, to make education cheap; for to them it is very dear. They must make the parents of their pupils pay for the claims which burden them, as well as for the outlay demanded by their occupation. If they did not, it would not be the part of prudence to labour in such a vocation at all. But now,—suppose the father had exercised a little forethought upon these matters—suppose he had, during the whole course of his married life, kept before him, as a subject of the first importance, the position of his daughters after his death, in case they remained unmarried. What difference would it have made in its actions? First of all, he would certainly have done his utmost to lay by something for them—even though it might have entailed the giving up of all personal luxuries. But it is probable that in many instances, even with the greatest self-denial, to lay by anything would be found impossible. Saving is a very slow process, and family and educational expenses are heavy; and the profession of a gentleman requires, even for its own support, that a man should live as a gentleman. In that case, surely, a man of sense and principle would put this fact before his children, and prepare for it.

Which is the worse for a young girl—to enter upon life perfectly acquainted with her true position, and ready to do a definite work in the best way? or to wake up to the necessity when her nerves are weakened and her heart is oppressed, and both body and soul are bowed down by the weight of an overwhelming affliction?

It is cowardice and cruelty—the words may seem very severe, but they are not the less true—to bring up girls with false expectations; to accustom them to unnecessary luxuries, and to waste the money which would be of inestimable value in the future, in indulging all the useless fancies of the present. True, a father may not be able to leave his daughters enough for their comfortable maintenance after his death; but he may save something which shall be an assistance to them when they are thrown upon their own resources.

A thousand pounds will produce but a very small income; yet it may make all the difference between beginning work with a burden of debt, or in the comfort of independence. And if young people are told what they are to have, and taught beforehand how they are to act, they will lose that sense of helplessness and isolation which crushes a woman's spirit even before she begins to face the struggle of life.

For women are wholly unlike men in this respect. A young man is stirred and stimulated by the consciousness of how much depends upon his own exertions: a young girl is, speaking generally, oppressed by it. She may rise superior to it—hundreds do,—and struggle nobly, and breast the waves which threaten to overwhelm them, and at length reach a secure haven; but it is with the continued sense of something unnatural in their position. There is a strain upon the intellect, a tension of the nerves, which blunts the capacity for enjoyment, and produces premature old age; and this result is almost

inevitable: yet it may be infinitely lessened by care and forethought.

A father who loves his daughters, and takes pride in them, cannot bear to think of the future in store for them; and because the subject is painful he puts it from him, but if he would make that future *present*, he might often lessen its burden a hundredfold.

They must work eventually—why should they not work now? He is at hand to give them advice and assistance. If they must hereafter support themselves, either entirely or mainly, it will surely be much happier for them to go forth to their labour with a knowledge that they have a shelter to which they may return, and parents who are watching their success, than with the terrible sense of desolation which accompanies the first break up of a happy home.

The father may find it pleasant to himself to spend his full income in giving his children indulgences; but it will in the end be unspeakably pleasanter for them if he will appropriate his surplus funds to setting them out in the world, through which they will afterwards have to make their way alone.

It is indeed against our English prejudices for persons living in a certain circle of society to come forward and bravely state that they have not the means of maintaining their families in comfort at the present moment, and at the same time providing a sufficient income for the future. But there are a great many English prejudices which are in the process of being broken down; and there are none which

may not be ultimately conquered if only some determined minds will exert themselves to combat them. If but a few of the daughters of men living in comfortable homes, and moving in cultivated society, yet having no provision for the future, were bravely to come forward and undertake either to be private governesses, or to receive pupils in their own homes, whilst their fathers are living, they would set an example which would by degrees be followed; the world would be compelled to accord to the profession a higher position, and the prejudice would at length be conquered. With this the whole tone of education would be raised. Children imbibe insensibly the opinions of their parents; and because, in a social point of view, their governesses are considered their inferiors, therefore, without meaning it, they learn to look down upon them; and the reaction upon their own minds is most injurious. A boy does not feel this towards his tutor. Society recognizes the clergyman who takes pupils as being on a footing with any other gentleman; and even the young nobleman knows that his present master may, at some future day, take his seat in the House of Lords. But there is no such elevation in store for a lady. Her profession is in most cases a descent in the social scale. She cannot bear to acknowledge this in her own immediate neighbourhood; and in consequence, when compelled to provide for herself she seeks a situation where she is unknown, and where that which she considers humiliation may be less keenly felt.

Yet her work is directly appointed by God. She is employed to train souls for heaven! If the smile of

derision could ever cross the face of an angel, might it not be excited by the pride which can think it noble to live at ease, and spend the precious days of a life, on which Eternity depends, in croquet, light literature, and music;—and humiliating to labour with the Lord of the Universe, to be a fellow-worker with the Redeemer of mankind?

But that thought is one which it is in vain to bring before the world. It may be a support to the governess, but it will not act upon society at large. *That* can only be reached by appeals to its own principles. When the sons of gentlemen voluntarily enter any particular profession, that profession is necessarily raised. When the daughters of gentlemen voluntarily do the same, we may expect similar results.

But how would this affect the principles on which school education is carried on, and how would it act upon the question of expense? Probably in this way.

If ladies, not absolutely at the moment obliged to educate, would come forward to undertake the task, they would do so under more favourable circumstances than can possibly be anticipated under the present system of extreme compulsion. They would not have the same pressing family claims, or be called upon to incur a great outlay without being certain of the means of providing for it. Immediate pecuniary profits would be a less indispensable condition of all these plans. They would be able to make more careful domestic arrangements, and the necessity of numbers would be less felt. And these things would act upon the pupils. They would be a check upon the school-girl spirit, and raise the whole

tone of the household. A good school in which there would be no overwhelming numbers, and where the privacy and comfort of the children were perfectly secured, might be carried on for much less if there were not relations in the background to be provided for, and borrowed moneys, demanding a high interest, to be paid off. Still more would this be the case if the work could be recognized as a pleasant and honourable profession, involving no loss of social position; but which might be undertaken in the vigour of life, and be a happy employment for years, in a home neighbourhood, and amongst home friends. Highly educated, superior women, who now undertake schools, begin their task, for the most part, in middle life, when the spring of their energy is destroyed, and they are broken down by sorrow. They know that they have but a few years in which they can work, and therefore they are compelled to set a high price upon their labour. They feel that it has displaced them from their original position, and they find it in consequence unutterably irksome, and their one desire is to shorten the term of their trial. They cannot afford to wait in the hope of gaining their end by slow degrees, for if they do they know that they shall never attain it at all. High terms or none are their only alternatives. If society complains of the expense, and the inferiority of female education, it must make the profession more attractive; it must offer counterbalancing advantages for the sacrifice which it requires. It will never do this of its own accord, yet it may be compelled to do so by outward pressure; and that

pressure can be put upon it by persons already holding a position in cultivated society, who bravely and voluntarily enter it, working with the highest of all aims, and not bowed down by the weight of *immediate* pecuniary need.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOVERNESSES IN FAMILIES.

But all this time we have been speaking of that much to be envied class of instructresses who are enabled to carry on their work in their own houses, and who, whatever may be their labour and their responsibility, have at least the luxury of independence, and can make their own arrangements, and dictate their own terms.

But governesses in private families, what is their position? How can it in any way be improved? According to general report, the position of an upper servant in England (they manage these things better abroad) is infinitely preferable to that of a governess. And yet society, as it now exists, cannot get on without governesses. It is, after all, the cheapest kind of education for a family, and most in accordance with our English habits. To send a girl away from home for education is almost always a *pis aller*. It is a plan adopted because nothing better is practicable. How is it, then, that persons, so indispensably necessary, are looked down upon and made miserable?

There would seem to be two reasons. First, the social position in which the world places them. Secondly, that in which they place themselves.

The first of these subjects has been partially discussed in the observations already made. Whether a person is a governess in a private family, or undertakes to receive pupils in her own home; she must come before the world with a claim for pity, when she begins her work; because she is driven to it by great pecuniary necessity, and the world's pity is certainly much more akin to contempt than love.

It is very sad, but we shall never make things better by trying to hide from ourselves the truth. Lessen the compulsion and the pecuniary need, and you lessen the contempt. Parents only can do this. They only can sacrifice their own present gratification for their children's future benefit; and seeing what lies before their daughters, not only prepare them for it, but send them out to their work with the shelter and support of their own name and position. Parents in the lower classes do so. They place their young daughters in situations where they can earn their own livelihood; and the little girl begins her work in the freshness of youth, and earns her small independence; and, if any care is taken of her, is enabled to put by trifling sums which, gradually accumulating, become the nest egg that is to give her the means of marrying should the opportunity offer. Amongst the lower orders, the woman can contribute her share towards the commencement of housekeeping, because she has been permitted to work for it. Amongst the educated classes she pines in silent dejection and hopelessness, because society has thought fit to assert that the woman who works for herself loses her social position; and no one has the courage to brave the assertion, and the daughter is not permitted to labour

for herself, whilst the father holds his social rank as heretofore.

But even supposing a young girl to begin life as a governess under the most favourable circumstances—with a parent's sanction and assistance, without any heavy pressure of pecuniary need, and with all the hope and energy of youth—still the position is one of dependence and inferiority. Servants will be disrespectful, visitors will be wanting in courtesy. There must be a sense of humiliation.

Must! That is a word very commonly used, merely because no one will take the trouble to inquire whether any other is more fitting. Humiliation implies the loss of something to which we have a right; but if we have no right there can be no humiliation. The prince is humbled when he is treated as a subject; but the subject accepts the same treatment with indifference.

And it is a question of serious moment whether the complaints of neglect made by governesses do not very frequently arise more from the false view which they take of their own position, than from any intentional absence of kindness and attention from the persons with whom they live. As a general rule, foreign governesses are much more agreeable inmates of a house than English ones. Something of this may be owing to the interest excited by difference of manner, dress, and tone. Something, also, to the imposing influence of a foreign tongue, which takes no note of difficulties that to ourselves are insurmountable. A good Parisian accent will always command a certain amount of respect. But beyond all is the fact that foreigners are less tenacious of

their dignity — they are less suspicious of insult, and therefore less apt to take offence. No doubt this arises in a great measure from their ignorance of English customs. They are ignorant of what ought to be, and therefore they cannot criticize. The result of such happy ignorance is an ease of manner which produces similar ease in the persons with whom they live. They find each other mutually agreeable, kind, helpful; and so are ultimately placed on a footing of cordiality, and often of real friendship.

Now, all this is quite apart from the question of sterling worth. The English governess may be worth tenfold more than the foreign one—looking to moral qualities and real information; but if she is inferior in good-humour and agreeability, she will never be placed on the same comfortable footing.

The real discomfort of a governess's position in a private family arises from the fact that it is undefined. She is not a relation, not a guest, not a mistress, not a servant—but something made up of all. No one knows exactly how to treat her, and therefore she is subject to what appears to be caprice, though it is often merely awkwardness and ignorance.

This is very unpleasant; but so are a great many other things in life. It rests with the governess to make it less so by recognizing it. She enters the family as a stranger. For the most part its members are quite as much afraid of her as she is of them. If it is their duty to put her at ease with them, it is equally her duty to put them at ease with her; and this can only be done by showing that she knows the place she is called upon to fill, and that she desires to fit herself into it, and make herself comfortable

in it. *Comfortable*—not necessarily happy; for happiness must depend upon many circumstances over which strangers have no control. A young girl, for instance, who, having lost her father, has just been thrown penniless upon the world, and knows that those she loves best are enduring heavy trials, cannot be happy; but the persons with whom she is to live as governess are not responsible for her unhappiness, though they are for her comfort. False dignity, however, never can make itself comfortable; it is always on the *qui vive* to take offence, and as a natural consequence it is always giving offence.

A governess not being a relation cannot expect immediately to be treated as such. She cannot enter into all the little family interests, and at first she will often feel herself in the way. Then, surely, it is the part of wisdom to keep out of the way. If a husband can only enjoy his wife's society for a few hours in the evening, he can scarcely help feeling the constant presence of a third person an annoyance. The governess may, as a general rule, expect always to join the family party in the evening, but it may be more considerate at times to keep away from it; or to go to her own room earlier, just to show that she recognizes her position, and is not fretted by it. So, again, she is not a guest. She cannot, therefore, expect the privileges of a guest. The mistress of the house will pay attentions to her friends which she will not pay to her; yet there may not be the slightest intentional neglect. If the governess will fit herself into this state of things, and instead of standing proudly aside, waiting for notice which never comes, will take advantage of

being an inmate of the house, and unobtrusively do her best to make everything pass off pleasantly, she will find both the visitors and the lady of the house much more ready to meet her on a pleasant footing, because they unconsciously feel at ease with her. Once more, she is not the mistress of the house, therefore she must often obey, and always show deference in manner and words, and this is a severe trial to a proud, independent spirit. But the moment a mother feels that the principle of recognition of her own position and her supreme authority, is owned, she will be contented; and in return for the acknowledgment on the part of the governess that it is her part to yield, she will be ready to allow that the governess is not a servant, and must, therefore, in her own peculiar province, be permitted to rule.

The relation between a mother and a governess does, indeed, require tact, but it is a tact founded upon self-evident truths. If a governess will not own these truths she must be miserable, but she has only herself to blame. It is not, indeed, for a moment asserted that the life of a governess is not one of great trial, or that the sources of her wretchedness lie wholly with herself; but there is a tendency in the present day to attribute the trial entirely to the position without regard to other circumstances, and thus to make it appear that it is impossible for a person holding such a position ever to be happy.

Now, putting aside the very low view of duty, which, this idea involves,—ignoring, as it does, that the consciousness of working for God may be, in itself, a very deep and lasting happiness,—there is little doubt that the view thus commonly taken of a governess's

life must act prejudicially on the minds of those young persons who are called upon to enter it. It is painted in such lugubrious colours that they shrink from it as from some inevitable suffering. The energy and hope which would brace them for their duties are taken away before they can enter upon them. The mother of the family is always to be stiff, the children are to be spoilt and obstinate, the visitors are to be proud, and the poor governess herself is to be intensely lonely.

Certainly these things are too often met with; but, on the other hand, there are instances, not few, in which the governess, by high principle, refinement, tact, has made her way into the hearts of those with whom she has lived, until she has become their dearly valued friend, and has lived with them happily for years. There might be many more if, at the outset, the life were not looked upon with a jaundiced eye. The effect of that mutual ease which arises from a clear perception of relative position, has already been spoken of, and, when once this freedom of feeling has been attained, the situation of a governess will no longer be irksome.

And for the other trials which in all probability will press heavily upon her, it must be remembered that they are not necessarily connected with her office. They belong to the special kind of adversity with which it has pleased God to afflict her. She is poor,—but it is not being a governess that makes her so. She is compelled to live away from her relations,—but so are a great many other persons in every rank of life. Servants pass their lives amongst strangers, but we do not find that they are always miserable in

consequence. She is obliged to work when she is weary and heart-sick. Who amongst the millions that earn their own livelihood is not compelled to do the same? She has no certain provision for sickness and age, but as a governess she has at least a chance of securing something.

But she has lost her social position, she is treated with neglect and disrespect. Yes. There is the trial. There lies the obstacle to happiness, and in so far as it is not the result of a morbid worldliness which would make its owner wretched in any situation, it must be removed by the governess herself.

She must make her own position by defining it for herself instead of leaving it for others to define it for her. What she is, or may be, if she will,—in the sight of God and His angels,—has already been said. It would seem that no earthly honour could add to or take away from the dignity of a fellow-worker with Christ.

What she is in the sight of man must depend upon her own conduct. No pride, however overbearing, can long withstand the quiet self-respect of thorough good breeding, which will always accord to others the place that is their due, and will never thrust itself into a position to which it is not entitled.

But if much of the *happiness* of a governess depends upon herself, all her *comfort* rests with the mother or the mistress of the family in which she resides. It would seem almost unnecessary to enter upon this subject. Every one knows and talks about it. The very fact of the pity bestowed upon governesses in England shows how universal is the feeling that in too many instances they are not properly

cared for, and that their services are not valued and recompensed aright.

The wages of a lady's-maid and of a nursery governess are about equal. The footman may compare with the well informed governess who cannot undertake accomplishments; whilst the coachman and butler may be placed side by side with the highly educated lady, who is to teach all accomplishments, to know two or three modern languages, to be thoroughly well read, to possess the highest principles, and to be blessed with perfect wisdom and an angelic temper; and who, for a hundred a year, is expected to dress well, to provide her own travelling and holiday expenses, to pay her doctor, to assist her relations, and to lay by enough to make herself comfortable in age.

It is not said that a governess with a hundred a year may not do all this, but there is no doubt that it will be a matter of difficulty, and that with a less sum the hope of providing for the necessities of sickness and age is almost vain. There are very charitable people who would willingly give their twenty pounds a year to the support of charitable institutions which are to assist governesses, and persons of a like class, who have fallen into, what is called, distressed circumstances; but who would think themselves likely to be ruined if a lady, wishing to be a governess, were to ask for an additional sum of ten pounds, in order that she might never be reduced to such aid.

Our lunatic asylums, our workhouses, and—alas for England that it should be so!—even our penitentiaries, are too often homes for decayed, distressed,

destitute governesses. Are these institutions no burden to us? Might it not be wiser and better if, when we are reckoning up our charities, we calculated so much less for the unhappy persons who are already their inmates, and so much more for those who may, sooner or later, be compelled to take refuge in them, if we insist upon driving the hard bargain which we call prudence? Every person must be judge in his own case. There must be a vast number who really have it not in their power to give a larger salary than they already offer; and there must be many governesses, who are thankful to take what they can get, and leave the future in God's Hands; but it is, nevertheless, the bounden duty of every one, who engages a governess, to consider what it is *right* to offer; and to measure the question of right by what it is known must be the governess's expenses and needs. If an additional five pounds, denied to a mother's own expenditure (perhaps in dress), would enable the governess to put five pounds into the savings bank; whereas, without it, she would merely be able to provide herself with respectable clothing, and pay her travelling and holiday expenses; then the self-denial ought to be practised, and the governess's salary increased. And so in other cases. Money expended upon luxuries and pleasures, and grudged to the governess, is money denied to Lazarus, and spent by Dives.

And, here again, an appeal may be made to fathers to consider betimes their daughter's future needs, and, so far as it is in their power, to provide for them.

The hope of leaving them even five hundred pounds, may be an impossibility; the idea of setting them out

in life by taking pupils in a house of their own may be impracticable; but if they can save *anything*, if they can put by only a few pounds in a savings bank, yet, in pity to their children, let them do it. The difference between starting in life actually penniless, or with only twenty pounds in reserve, is incalculable. So very small a sum it appears to the father, accustomed to the expenses of a household,—it seems scarcely worth while to go through the little self-denials, by which such a trifle is to be saved. And yet that twenty pounds may make all the difference between hope and despair; possibly between sin and salvation! It may bridge over the gulf, into which absolute destitution would have plunged, and give a breathing time, during which rescue may be at hand. Or if no such time of trial should in God's Providence be appointed, yet the possession of even so small a sum will give a sense of support to the young girl first setting out to earn her own independence. It will be something for her to fall back upon; it may perhaps be the nucleus to which she will have a pleasure in adding, and assist in the formation of habits of care and economy, which will ultimately place her in a position of independent ease.

How fathers, who neglect to provide for their daughters, when it is in their power,—even as they enable their sons to provide for themselves,—justify to themselves their singular blindness it is impossible to say. It is only to be hoped that God sees more excuses for them than their fellow-creatures can. Judging them by the standard of common sense, it would seem that the man is worse than

a fool who does not, at all periods of his life, face the position in which his wife and daughters must be left, in the event of his death, and prepare for it accordingly. He may have years of prosperity before him, in which he may be able to secure a fortune for them. He may be justified in calculating upon this probability, it may cheer and inspirit him. But at the present moment if he were to die—and what a tremendous "if" that is—they would not have enough to live upon. Painful as the thought is, he may not dare to put it aside. And surely it must compel him to be economical, to save the utmost he can; to put aside five pounds, if he cannot spare a hundred; to store up shillings, if he cannot lay by sovereigns. If this were done as it ought to be, what a moral revolution it would create in England! Many of the most crying evils of our luxurious age arise from the pressure of poverty upon those who are unprepared to meet it. The sins of the fathers are, by the working of natural laws, visited on the children; and although there are unhappily many cases in which it is absolutely out of the father's power to lay by anything, and in which he can but trust his children to God's care in a spirit of faith, these instances are by no means the majority; and He who has said, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me," [1] has also said, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." [2]

It is for the fathers of the present day to take

[1] Jer. xlix. 11. [2] 1 Tim. v. 8.

warning; and if they look with surprise and horror at the statistics of our charitable institutions, to remember that, by indulging their own selfish affection, and spending money upon their daughters' amusements, instead of laying it by for their future maintenance, they are doing their best to add to that sickening catalogue of sin and misery which makes the heart of the Christian grow faint, and tempts the blasphemer to ask, "Is there a God in Heaven?"

But to return again to the duties involved in the relation which subsists between the mother of a family and the governess.

The amount of salary is but one amongst many points which the mistress of a household is, in this case, to consider. It is scarcely possible that a governess's services should be adequately remunerated, and therefore she is the more entitled to the privileges which are to make amends for the pecuniary disadvantage.

When complaints are made of the smallness of a clergyman's income, one of the plausible arguments brought forward on the opposite side is, that the position which is ensured to him makes up for the absence of money; the fact being overlooked that the necessity of keeping up such a position makes the need of money greater, and the want of it the more distressing. But, however unsound this argument may be, the use of it is at least an acknowledgment that social position is somewhat of an equivalent for poverty, and therefore the loss of that position in the case of a governess must be considered as so much additional poverty. We cannot change

the state of society at once. There is no magic wand by which we may cause a certain class of persons to be recognized as equal, when English pride and prejudice have decided that they are not equal; but it is in the power of every mistress of a family to do something towards breaking down barriers which exclusiveness has erected; and to define in her own household the position of friendliness and respect which the governess ought to occupy.

As she treats the governess so, as a rule, will the servants and visitors treat her; and it is from them that the petty annoyances arise which make the position of a governess so trying. And the obligation lies equally upon the master of a family. It is often to please him that the governess is put in the background. He comes home from his day's employment weary, and perhaps irritable, and he wishes to be with his wife and children alone. The presence of a third person is irksome: and, therefore, when the governess undertakes her duties, she is made to understand that she will only be expected to spend the evening in the drawing-room when she is invited. And on those special occasions she is still more of an interruption, because the ordinary family habits are disturbed by her presence. But if parents wish their children to be well educated, they must make personal as well as pecuniary sacrifices. Money will not purchase what they want. They desire a sensible, affectionate, sincere friend, who is to watch over their children when they cannot do it themselves. Kindness and affection are to be won,—not bought. If they will make the governess one of their family, she will

share their interests, and exert herself for them, at all hours, and on all occasions. If they shut her out from it, she must almost inevitably be thrown back upon what will seem to be her own interests. She will feel that for so much money she is expected to undertake so much work; and when she has completed this, she will imagine herself at liberty to provide for her own gratification, leaving it to the mother to do whatever else the children's well-being may require. Parents cannot enjoy the pleasure connected with the companionship of children, unless they undertake the corresponding duties. They may, if they will, bear the whole responsibility of education themselves; but, in that case, they must do the work. If in any degree they devolve this responsibility upon another, then, according to that degree, they must be prepared to yield a portion of their parental privilege; that is to say, they must give up a certain amount of authority, they must be contented to find another sharing their children's respect and affection; and they must be willing to admit the person on whom they depend to fulfil the task which they are unable to undertake themselves, to that position in their family which her important office demands.

Unless this is done, the children will suffer the inevitable result of a false relation. Their governess is their superior, yet not their superior. They are called upon to obey her, yet they see her treated with disrespect. They are told that she is clever and good, but they find that nevertheless she is always kept in the background. They are inclined to be

fond of her, but their mother is perhaps jealous of their affections, and they dare not show it. Such an unsettled state of feeling must produce unsettled conduct. Children can never be rightly governed by any one whose right to authority and respect they are at liberty to dispute. They will be disobedient and wilful. The governess will punish them. The children will appeal to their mother, who very probably will take their part. They will then, of course, be more naughty, and the governess in her turn will appeal. The mother will be fretted with both parties, and lay the blame of the contest on the governess's temper.

A change of dynasty will necessarily follow. But let the new governess be an angel of sweetness and wisdom, still she cannot make her way. The undercurrent of neglect and want of respect is too strong for her. She will probably resign her post long before her resignation is desired, and a successor will be needful. So it will go on again and again; and at the end the children will come forth from the hands of a series of governesses, critical instead of submissive; self-opinionated instead of humble-minded; having spent the most important years of their young lives in unlearning under one plan of instruction what they had acquired under the preceding; and finding themselves at last standing on the threshold of life, with only one certain conviction, that they have never been taught anything properly, and that governesses are simply a mistake and an imposition. When in after years they have households and families of their own, this early prejudice

will almost certainly remain, and they will treat a governess as their parents in former days treated her; and so the tradition of evil is handed down, and the customs of society, which depreciate the position of a governess, are strengthened.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRAINING OF GOVERNESSES.

WHAT has been said hitherto has been based upon the supposition that governesses are always persons who can be admitted to friendship, and are competent to exercise authority. But it may be objected, and with great truth, that in this possibility the whole difficulty of the question lies. If these ideal governesses existed, would society venture to look down upon them? If they do not exist, is society in fault?

The question as to what society would venture to do can only be answered by experience. As a rule it now worships rank, wealth, and talent. Whether it will ever be induced to admit good sense, good breeding, and high principle into the number of its idols remains to be proved. But supposing that it would, it must candidly be acknowledged that English governesses cannot always establish a claim to such honour.

Perhaps it is the same with all professions. The number of those who may be termed first-rate or superior will always be few. And governesses come before the world at a great disadvantage. Very many are ladies who have never been trained for their duties, and are sensitively alive to what they

consider the humiliation of their position. Many are persons who have never mixed in good society; whilst a third class will be found to consist of young persons, left orphans at an early age, who have been educated for their work at some public institution, and are sent forth from it into private households, with scarcely any experience of the world or the needs of domestic life. It is not to be wondered at if, amongst persons so variously circumstanced, there should be found habits and tempers which must render it extremely difficult to admit them all to the intimacies of home life. Yet more—it must be admitted, though with very great regret,—that the persons most calculated by their manners and general tone to be agreeable friends and companions are by no means the most likely to teach well.

A good governess, in the ordinary sense, is a quick, clever woman, who is a first-rate musician, an excellent linguist and historian, who can discourse upon any "ology" which happens to be a subject of interest for the moment, and, by dint of indefatigable industry and energy, can enable her pupils to shine somewhat as she shines herself.

Let English ladies answer for themselves, whether, speaking generally, they are at all able to compete with such a candidate. Where is the young lady of three or four and twenty who would like to undergo a searching examination in history, geography, and languages; or who would undertake to answer the questions which are put to boys before they enter the army or the Indian Civil Service? The very small amount of information which enables women to make a fair show in society is really ludicrous. Any

one who has had much to do with girls who are supposed to have finished their education must be aware of this. There is no time allowed for real study, at the age when study becomes most important. Our grandmothers thought eighteen quite old enough for an initiation into the mysterious delights of "coming out;" but seventeen is the age which is now more generally fixed upon; and as a natural result, at sixteen the young ladies begin to dream of balls, and to consider lessons a drudgery; and when once fairly launched into the world the idea of really cultivating the mind is almost, if not altogether, laid aside. If parents are wealthy, the daughters have the claims of a large circle of friends and constant engagements; if they are not, they have to share household duties, and home anxieties. The light literature of the day is all they have leisure to read; and the history and geography which were learnt in the schoolroom are remembered only in their vague outlines. A few prominent names and facts are retained—just sufficient to keep them from committing any gross blunders in conversation, and to enable them to show the requisite amount of interest in the topics of the day; but beyond this all is chaos. Yet, it may be said, they do very well. Women have such a natural readiness, they so soon perceive quicksands in conversations, and are so clever in avoiding them. It is very rarely that even the most ignorant will venture out of her depth. And then information in a woman is, it is supposed, not wanted. It does not attract. Men are rather shy of it. It savours of the pedantic. They like being listened to deferentially, and think argument with a woman

beneath them. The clever woman, who has an opinion of her own, is alarming, more especially if she ventures to strengthen her statement by facts. The gentle young girl who looks up with timid admiration, asks a few sensible questions, and says "Yes" and "No" at the right moment, is delightful.

And if the voyage of life could always be made in smooth water—if there were no "changes and chances," no death, no poverty—these refined, timid, ignorant girls might pass the time of their earthly sojourn in rest and happiness. They know enough to please their parents—more than enough to delight their husbands. They will make obedient wives and careful mothers; and as they were instructed themselves, so can their children be instructed. It is all simple, natural, easy of attainment. But, suddenly it may be, storms gather on the horizon, rumours of losses, symptoms of illness: the dark cloud of poverty, though "small but as a man's hand," looms in the distance. Rapidly it widens and spreads, and in a moment it bursts. These pleasant-mannered, interesting young girls are destitute. They have to maintain themselves, and only one profession is open to them. They must be governesses. What can they teach? What do they know? They themselves will answer—in all humility and truthfulness—"Nothing." But their friends will answer for them. They have had a good education, they can play a little, and sing a little, and speak a little French, and read a little German; and of course they know something of geography and history. And then they are so thoroughly refined and well-bred, there can be no difficulty in procuring for them good situations. The

young ladies are told that they must profess to teach all which they are supposed to know, and they obey. A situation is offered them: a home, in which they are to be quite happy. "They will be so well treated, and made entirely one of the family!"

It is all bright, *couleur de rose*, so far as any such position, under such circumstances, can be; and the young governess is found to be really all that has been said of her, as regards sweet temper, and amiability, and good principle. Only, unfortunately —it is very disappointing—she knows nothing. The bubble of information which in the clear air and the sunshine of prosperity shone so gaily, and floated so lightly, has burst. She is perfectly incompetent for her task. She has but a vague recollection of what she once knew. She feels no certainty about anything she attempts. She has not the slightest idea how to teach so as to interest children. She can but go through a dull routine which makes the daily lessons irksome to herself and her pupils. She is herself wholly dissatisfied, so are the parents. They feel a change must be made; and at length they say so, "with great regret, but they must consider their children's good;" and the poor young girl leaves her situation stamped with the brand of incapacity.

There is no need to follow the sad history of trial and discouragement further. All know what it must be. Refinement of manner, good taste, and good breeding, like everything else, have only a certain marketable value. They are inestimable treasures in themselves, but if the world needs something else they will not find purchasers.

In the present desire for the cultivation of the

intellect, a clever, though under-bred woman, who really knows what she attempts to teach, will make her way before the refined lady who has only a superficial amount of information. Parents will accept the good teaching, and hope to neutralize themselves the effects of the ill-breeding.

But the ranks of English governesses are continually recruited from these penniless, ignorant, yet well-born and well-bred young girls. What is to be done with them?

And what is to be done also with the other class, possibly not well-born, and certainly not well-bred, because they have never had the advantages of good society?

Are we to give up education into their hands without an effort? Must our children necessarily be taught by superficial or under-bred governesses? Alas for English society if it is to be so! The process of deterioration may not be rapid. The world's gloss may in a degree conceal vulgarity of mind; and the intellectual activity of the age may, in a measure, counteract ignorance. But the evil must work, and it will and does work.

Young people who are constantly associated with those whom they cannot thoroughly respect, will lose the principle of reverence. If they have much intellect, they will become wilful and independent; if they have little, they will develop into the vapid slaves of fashion and folly;—possibly into something far worse than folly.

The characteristics of the young girls of the present day, the heart-sickening tales of fashionable vice, the pretence, and extravagance, and unutterable

littleness to be found amongst some of those who hold the proudest positions of rank and wealth in this land—to what are they to be traced? To education. And who have been the educators? Governesses; not themselves fast, or vicious, or pretentious, or petty—but simply incompetent, and therefore not ensuring respect.

The evil is universally acknowledged, and some of the most thoughtful minds of the age have occupied themselves in seeking a remedy. We owe to this acknowledgment the foundation of a college in London, where men of distinguished ability have given time and attention to lectures and classes upon all subjects, which may be attended by young women desirous to qualify themselves for being governesses. We hear also of efforts made to extend the stimulus of examination by university men, to young girls educated either at school or at home. The need is pressing, and each person is tempted to adopt the panacea nearest at hand. And no one can say that such remedial measures have entirely failed, or are certain to fail. There is no doubt that Queen's College is a great assistance in enlarging the minds of those who frequent it, with a real desire to profit by its advantages. It may be expected also that, should the idea of public examinations ever be adopted, it would rouse to the utmost the mental energies of those who have always been inclined to work; but putting aside all other objections to such measures—to the latter especially—it may be permitted to question whether the system pursued in either of these cases can really prove a remedy adequate to the need, because both deal with only

one side of a great question. They offer assistance to the mental deficiency, but they leave the moral untouched.

And that for a very plain, almost a self-evident, reason.

They are both worked by men; and men, however earnest, devoted, and intellectual, are not the persons whom nature points out as fitted to be the educators of young girls.

It is indeed one of the good points of the schemes to which reference has been made, that they do not profess to attempt moral training. Yet without it, how is the standard for English governesses to be raised?

But we may go still further, and assert that as English society is at present constituted even the intellectual training of girls by men is not without serious risks; that it works for good only when counteracted by a very strong womanly influence which can guard and check it. Any one who has had much to do with young girls of the educated classes will probably own that in most instances there are but three points of view in which they are likely to regard their gentlemen teachers. Either they will be afraid of them—or they will quiz them—or they will make romances about them. Fear, ridicule, and romance are not very elevating influences. The last indeed will often be hidden under the veil of respect; but if examined it will be seen that underneath lies a very large admixture of vanity and excitement, which cannot fail to do grave injury.

Women can deal with women as men never can. They know the material upon which they have to

operate. They are not kept back by any chivalrous feeling from plain statements of truth; and they can enter into innumerable little difficulties which to a man are simply incomprehensible. The most sensible man will now and then give advice to a young girl, at which a sensible woman will lift up her hands in astonishment. Above all, women can give girls sympathy with safety, and sympathy is the great instrument of influence with all young people.

If the standard of governesses in England is ever to be raised, it must, so it would seem, be through the medium of women; of persons gifted with that rare quality—common sense—and who, being well educated, well informed, thoroughly refined, and accustomed to good society, will devote themselves to the training of young governesses under their own eye; giving them all the sympathy and comfort of home friendship, whilst showing them how they may cultivate whatever talents they possess, and make them most serviceable to their pupils. The only way in which anything of this kind is now attempted is in large schools, where the governess receives a pupil teacher, giving her the advantage of masters, whilst making her useful in instructing the younger children. But this, it will be seen at once, is only a question of mutual convenience. The governess wants help, the pupil teacher wants instruction. It is a case of barter. There is nothing noble in it, nothing winning to the affections, or likely to exercise a permanent influence for good.

Is it a dream of Utopia that at some not distant

day we may find training *homes* for governesses established, as well as training schools for National Schoolmistresses? Such an undertaking would demand an outlay of money at first, but, possibly, in the end it might be made self-supporting. The young governesses would be expected to contribute something, and if they could not do it themselves, they would almost certainly find friends who would be thankful, for a small sum, to secure for them permanent advantages. And, perhaps, if the plan were carried out in London, or some large town, by one in whom the world had confidence, parents, with only moderate incomes, might be induced to try the working of a thoroughly superior day-school, attached to the home, in which their children might have the stimulus and interest of competition, and the advantage of good masters, and still be kept under their own eye.

If this plan could once be set on foot, the young governesses, whilst studying themselves, might be practically taught how to make children study. And they would have experience without risk. They would be tried indeed, and their faults would be developed, but they would be made to see them, and be shown how to guard against them. Intellectually, they would have the great benefit of discovering their deficiencies, and remedying them, so far as time and opportunity would allow; and—what is infinitely more important— they would learn how to employ their natural superiority in age and experience, so as to make up for any want of actual information; and by continuing the task of self-teaching, and self-improvement, they would learn

how to keep themselves in advance of their pupils, and ensure their respect, even though occasionally they might be forced to own themselves ignorant.

The position of the head of such a home would, indeed, be difficult and arduous. She would have to take care that the school was carefully and well worked, and to superintend and work in it herself; and when the actual labour of tuition was over, she would have to make herself the friend and guide, the comforter and confidante, of the young inmates of her house. It would be the duty of the mother of a family, added to that of the governess. And there could be no idea of pecuniary remuneration. If not called upon to sacrifice her own fortune, the utmost she could expect would be to save herself from diminishing it. She might cover her expenses; it cannot be expected that she should do more. She must, therefore, be found in the upper classes of society, amongst those who have all that this world can give in comfort and luxury, but are willing to sacrifice that all, if need be—for Christ's sake.

Time was, when the expectation of meeting with such a person would have been pronounced hopeless, but late experience has shown that women are to be found capable of making any sacrifice, and undertaking any amount of labour, if the object can be proved to be worthy of the effort. In the present case all persons, probably, would agree in the importance of raising the standard of governesses in England, and through these means improving education throughout the whole country. The only difference of opinion would be as to the means to be employed.

With regard to governesses themselves, the advantages to be derived from such home training would seem too obvious to be dwelt upon. There is, probably, no one who, on looking round a circle of acquaintances, cannot instantly fix upon some case in which the opportunity for study and experience which it would offer, would be felt to be invaluable as a preparation for the work of tuition.

And it must be remembered that female superintendence and guardianship need not necessarily interfere with the advantages to be derived from the partial instruction of men. No lady would compete, or wish to compete, with the able professors of Queen's College, for instance. She would only be too glad that the young girls under her charge should take advantage of their lectures. All that she could desire would be to render them appreciated; to see that what was taught was thoroughly worked into the mind; and to show, by practical experience, how it might be made useful for the benefit of younger children.

For the instruction of young children is a subject distinct in itself. The neglect of the lesser regulations which enforce discipline and order in a school-room will interfere with their progress, even under a very clever governess; whilst the attempt to give them general information, if it is beyond their power, or if they have no sufficient foundation of elementary facts, will ultimately prove a failure. And a most essential part of good education, also, which nothing but practical experience can teach, is the very small amount of privation and punishment which, judiciously administered, will be perfectly efficacious in

keeping any girls in order. Men, accustomed to deal with the more violent and headstrong nature of boys, do not always comprehend this; and women, when they are inclined to be strict disciplinarians, will scarcely believe it. Three parts of the discipline of a schoolroom may be maintained by the mere working of regular and well understood laws, carefully enforced. And should any further interference be required, once gain a young girl's thorough respect, and the mere tone of the voice will be sufficient to touch the heart, and lead it to repentance and amendment.

And though the young people who desire to be governesses are often very unfit for their office, when their actual amount of information is alone considered, yet, if they have anything like common ability, they may, after the training, even of a year, be raised to a much higher level. After all, it is the mind itself, not the information which it has absorbed, that is the efficient engine in instruction. Almost all women who, at the present time, are undertaking to teach, have, probably, felt this. Their task has, most likely, presented itself to them unexpectedly. They were not trained for it. They have been learning all their lives, just as their pupils have been learning; and they have made mistakes, and have to lament failures, and to grieve over their own incompetency. It has, possibly, been a matter of surprise to themselves how, with their small amount of actual information, they have been able to teach anything.

It is the mind—the working of thought and experience—which has placed them above their pupils.

The children will, probably, remember the dates of the English kings perfectly, whilst the governess is by no means certain of them; but the reason why the knowledge of those dates is an advantage—the use of them as pegs on which to hang other contemporaneous facts, so as to arrange the history of the world in order, and from this history to deduce the great principles of God's Providential government of mankind, and to connect it with what we are permitted to know of the vast scheme of the universe—is quite beyond a child's natural power of thought to originate, though it is not beyond its comprehension when once presented to it. Children are not at all injured by finding their governess ignorant of certain facts, so long as they feel the superiority of her mind. They quite appreciate the distinction between memory and thought; and thus, a comparatively small stock of information, with a really working reflective mind and habits of industry, will enable a young person to teach both agreeably and well, if she can only acquire that preliminary experience which is needed to give her confidence, and with which even a year's judicious training may supply her.

And so, also, the moral powers will be found to multiply the intellectual to an extent which is almost incredible, until it has been actually observed.

A young governess undertakes her first situation, probably, in complete ignorance of her own qualifications for government. She does not even know what qualifications government requires. She has not the least idea that it must first of all begin with self, and that unless it does so it must infallibly fail.

Her only idea is that of authority and obedience: the former exercised through the medium of words, the latter exhibited in action. She has no perception of the fact that if she insists upon her pupils being attentive while she herself is listless, she is counter-ordering by her behaviour what she is enforcing in her language; neither does she see, that if she is obeyed simply because the children dread punishment, the obedience is not due to the power of a right authority, but to the spirit of fear, and, therefore, is, in reality, no obedience at all.

These things and many more must be learnt before a young governess can educate properly, and they can only be acquired by training and experience. When they are acquired, however, the task of educating ceases to be irksome. Persons always like to do what they feel they can do well; and a great element of happiness in the life of one who has to teach others, is the feeling that she can govern judiciously and instruct with interest.

No wonder, then, that young governesses are unhappy, since, too often, they can do neither. But a little preparatory guidance would go a great way towards remedying these evils. And if a girl has really high religious principle, and can rule and influence rightly, her instruction will, in the end, be worth more than that of a cleverer person who is inferior in moral power. It will make less show, but it will be more durable. What is taught will be taught carefully, conscientiously, thoroughly. The children will feel the elevating influence of the mind to which they are called upon to submit. They will exert themselves heartily; they will feel pleasure in

giving pleasure by their improvement; and when once this feeling is introduced into a schoolroom, lessons are no longer a drudgery. But high moral and religious principles will not always work in the right way of themselves. The eccentricities of goodness are quite as remarkable as those of genius. The best of us need common sense; and, perhaps, no advantage which a year or two of careful training would secure for a young governess, would be greater than that which would teach her to make a right use of her virtues, as well as to watch against and check her faults.

Yet more, that which creates a difficulty in admitting governesses to a perfect intimacy in a family, is the fact that they do not all bear the stamp of perfect good breeding. Some have been accustomed only to second-rate society. Some have been neglected at home; some, educated at large schools, where there has been no opportunity of acquiring the little refinements which make familiarity safe and pleasant. A young girl, under these circumstances, does not perhaps understand the difference between ease of manners and freedom. She is apt, unconsciously, to take liberties, and by little unintentional awkwardnesses, or neglect of the conventionalities of the world, to give offence. For it is not the question of birth which makes a person ladylike, or renders it pleasant to live with her. It is education in the little niceties of social life, joined with a habit of thoughtfulness and self-control. Both are equally necessary.

How vulgar polished ladies and gentlemen can be, we have all probably known by experience, when

we have seen them thrown off their guard, and giving way to intemperate passion. But we do not always consider that neglect of the little etiquettes of social life will jar and fret every day, whilst the storms of passion will perhaps never be heard. Very careful, anxious mothers will let their little girls acquire habits which are inadmissible in society, and think they are doing them no injury, so long as they instil good principles into their minds. But when the little girls become the young governesses, and do what they have been accustomed to do from childhood, they are pronounced vulgar, and *tabooed.*

Now, the training under a thoroughly refined well-bred woman, accustomed to notice and check all these little neglects, would be of untold value to a young girl before entering upon the office of a governess. It would tend to give her the ease and self-possession which will set the persons she is to live with at ease also. The stiff propriety, the *crinoline* of manner, which destroys all grace, and inflicts a blow upon those who come in contact with it, is, in nine cases out of ten, the result of a self-conscious shyness, based upon ignorance. Persons who are afraid of doing or saying something which should not be said or done, have no refuge but in stiffness; for if once they leave this shelter, they feel that they are in danger of giving offence. And unconscious offence is given perpetually. The young governess perhaps appears late at the dinner-table, and makes no apology; or she reads her letters without begging to be excused for doing so; or she rings the bell because she feels herself at home; or she whispers in company; or yields to some feeling of curiosity;

or thrusts herself uncalled for into conversation; and the fastidious lady of the house draws back, and decides that she is ill-bred, and chills her with distant politeness, and so makes her wretched. Perhaps the lady is not to be blamed, but the governess is certainly to be pitied. She cannot know what she has never been taught.

These small matters, how great they are in their effect upon life! and how essential would be the advantage which a young girl would receive if she could be *toned* as well as taught—fitted for the drawing-room as well as prepared for the schoolroom, before she undertook to educate!

And if the happiness of the governess herself is to be considered, we can scarcely overestimate the support which many an otherwise friendless girl would receive from the feeling that her course was watched by friends of position and influence, who were willing to advise her in a difficulty, to sympathize with her in trouble, to restore to her, in fact, though necessarily in an inferior degree, the guardianship of the home which she had lost. How many desolate hearts would be cheered, how many saved from shipwreck on the rocks and quicksands of a perilous life, if only they could feel that they belonged, as it were, to those whom the world respected, and were responsible to them for their conduct!

And yet again the thought arises, is not the idea Utopian?

Even supposing that such a home as has been suggested were to be set on foot, and to be found to work well, how very little it could do! A dozen

governesses might perhaps be sent forth from it annually. That is reckoning upon rather a large number, and a complete success. What can twelve good governesses do towards raising the tone of education in England?

The answer to this is—Try.

We are looking at the acorn, so little that it would seem impossible it should ever become an oak. Yet if it is fashioned by God's Providence, in obedience to His law, it will undoubtedly germinate and spread. And the moment it does spread, even in a small circle, its influence must be felt in those beyond. Let one such home work well, and others would follow; and though the number of persons so educated and trained might always be few in comparison, yet we may not therefore decide that their influence would be slight. Few of us perhaps ever realize to ourselves how the existence of a recognized upper class in any society affects the tone of the whole. We see it in the working of social distinctions. The manners of a colony are unlike those of England because, where all believe that they stand on the same level, there is no need for outward deference. That which tends more than anything else to keep up the external refinement of the professional classes in England is the existence of a class above them, with whom they are constantly mingling; and who, from the fact of their position, are accustomed to dictate certain laws for the conduct of society, which all who desire to be admitted to their circle on terms of equality are compelled to observe.

An acknowledged standard of good breeding insensibly affects the whole community. So again, and in a much more important way, the influence of

university education tells upon the thousands who carry on their studies elsewhere. According as the standard of the university is high or low, so will be that of public schools; and by the standard of public schools, private schools are compelled to measure themselves.

And in these instances, as in many others of a like kind, it will be found that influence, when directly exercised, is restricted to a few persons. We talk of the will of the people, the power of the people, we say that numbers must always gain the day. And we are right so far as this, that the will of numbers will always be the most effective instrument which can be used for the carrying out of any purpose. But we shall find, upon inquiry, that the will of the many has in all cases been first moved by that of the few, and that even when aroused, it can never work until its force is concentrated in the hands of a few.

The Reformation changed the current of religious thought throughout all Christendom; it was essentially the will and the mind of the many;—but we can count up the number of the leading reformers on our fingers.

There is, therefore, no reason for distrusting the result of any plan because it must begin upon a small scale, and act only upon a few persons. It is the spirit in which an undertaking is commenced that permeates society. The form under which it may first develop itself may be imperfect, it may even fade and die, and yet it may leave a seed which will eventually spring up and bear fruit. If the educational movement for the improvement of female

education in England could be led by a few persons of sufficient position, talent, high principle, and good sense, to impress upon it their own stamp; if it could be home training under their own eye, which should accustom the young girls placed under their charge to the refinements of really good society, whilst at the same time they enjoyed the advantages of good instruction; it would ensure to the governesses who were sent forth a distinction which, it would seem, could not fail to raise them in the social scale. Supported by the friendship and guardianship of such persons, a young girl could scarcely be open to the neglect which is met with by the unknown penniless orphan. And when once this rise was acknowledged, parents in the more polished ranks of society would not be so unwilling to allow their daughters to undertake educational duties, and the daughters would cease to look upon it as a hardship. The few would then become the standard for the many, and ultimately, it might be hoped, the leaven would make its way through all grades.

The work would, indeed, be very slow; for a long time it would scarcely be recognized; but perhaps, in the end, it would be surer than a more extensive movement which would meet only the intellectual needs of the day, and must leave those belonging to the moral and social relations untouched.

Yet once more it may be objected;—this scheme for raising the standard of governesses can never really operate to any extent, so long as crowds of ill-bred, half-educated young people are pressing into the service, whose only object is to raise themselves from an inferior position, and who undertake

to be governesses merely because they think it more "genteel" than to serve in a shop or become lady's-maids.

This is very true. But there are two answers to be made to this objection.

In the first place, the very fact of the crowds who seek to be governesses must tend eventually, and is tending even now, to diminish the number. People are opening their eyes to the fact that the profession is overstocked and ill-paid; and the movement made for the employment of women in other ways—though there are enormous difficulties in its path—must ultimately remove into other spheres those who, either from incapacity or want of education, are not fitted to undertake the task of instruction. In the second place, it must be remembered, that there will always be a large class who, from not being refined and fastidious themselves, will be insensible to the defects of others. A second-rate class of governesses will always exist, because there will always be second-rate persons to employ them. The efforts which are made to improve the mental cultivation of the middle classes will, no doubt, in a degree, render them more fit to be teachers; and the fact that when they become governesses they are *rising* in the world, instead of falling, creates an immense distinction between them and the young girl born in a higher grade, and suddenly compelled to take what is called a "situation." They do not want sympathy and commiseration, however much they may guidance.

The need at present under consideration is, that "ladies" should be educated by "ladies;" and the

fact to which none of us can shut our eyes is, that very few ladies are competent to the task; and that if they are, they look upon it as a descent, just as much as the persons beneath them look upon it as an advance in the social scale. Whilst this is the case, the idea of raising the tone of English education in the upper ranks of society is hopeless.

What should we think of the provision made for the education of English boys, hereafter to be English gentlemen, if the only instructors that could be found for them in their youth were either men who, without having had any previous training, were compelled to enter the profession by the pressure of poverty; or persons who undertook the task, because they thought that a tutor was a greater man than a clerk in a counting-house.

That which makes an English gentleman what he is, is the respect accorded to those who devote themselves to his education. If we were to lower the social status of the men who work in our public schools, or of the clergymen who take private pupils, we should instantly find that an intellectually inferior class would take their place; and the whole tone of English society would be affected by the change.

But what is to be done with the refined, carefully nurtured, but unintellectual "ladies," who are quite incompetent to teach, and yet must labour for their livelihood.

That is a very large question. Society is working out the answer; slowly, at the risk of much suffering from the delay, and as yet without any prospect of meeting it satisfactorily.

Perhaps in this narrow, exclusive England, the slave of fashion and conventionalities, we have yet to learn that work under any form is noble. The time may come when we shall admit to our social circle the friend who, being poor, undertakes to make our dresses, as we should, if, from the same necessity, she professed to fulfil a duty which she could not perform, and became a governess. So also the religious world (taking the expression in its best sense) may by and by recognize that a woman is not always to be expected to give up time and health, and the brightest years of life, to work in penitentiaries, and reformatories, and schools, and amongst the most degraded and repulsive of our overgrown population, without some offer of remuneration.

Even an apostle could say, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? . . . who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"[1]

They who can give money as well as time to these duties are the happy few. But must the work be necessarily less efficacious or acceptable when undertaken in a Christian spirit by one who sees in it a profession by which she is to support herself? Then is the virtue of a clergyman's work negatived in proportion to the temporal advantages he derives from it!

But if a bishop can be saintly with five thousand pounds a year, and a rector with five hundred, would it be impossible for a deaconess to be saintly with fifty? It is true that women delight in self-sacrifice, and that the educated classes are so little

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 7.

accustomed to the idea of remuneration for any duties they undertake, that many would shrink from it as from insult. But if God tells them, by the events of His Providence, that they cannot live unless they will work for remuneration, then, to set themselves against such work is simply pride and rebellion; and the more Christian in spirit a woman is, the more simply, humbly, and naturally will she accept the idea of working for money where others work for love.

A lady, not in the least fitted to teach, might make an admirable deaconess; but, in the present state of things, she is compelled to undertake what she cannot do, and to give up what she can, because, in the one situation she can live, and in the other she must starve.

The suggestions made in this chapter are merely theoretical, they can have no real value until tested, and they may be found wholly unpractical. But when great and crying evils, like those of the inefficiency of governesses, and the non-employment of women, are acknowledged to exist, the very fact of being able to do nothing is a temptation to think the more. And even when ideas are in themselves useless, the very arguments which are used to refute, often tend to lead other minds in the same direction, so that, ultimately, the solution of the problem is worked out.

CHAPTER XV.

INSTRUCTION.

This then, it will perhaps be said, is all which can be suggested to assist governesses in fulfilling a task for which it is asserted, that the greater number are incompetent;—they are told to look upon themselves as having a very important duty to perform, and to content themselves with the dignity thus conferred upon them of working directly for God! But if they are unfitted for their task, there can be no great satisfaction in undertaking it. Can no practical advice be given them? Can they not be instructed how they should teach; what books they should use; how they may best arouse their pupils' energies; under what form information may be given, so as to be most permanently useful? Certainly, this kind of advice would be most helpful, most valuable. Many persons have already attempted it, and yet no one has really succeeded in offering it in a satisfactory form. And, perhaps, for this reason—that no person is thoroughly capable of doing it.

Principles are eternal, and therefore applicable to all ages, and all circumstances. Rules vary according to every phase in which the kaleidoscope of

human society presents itself to us. The kind of teaching which is very effective in one case, will be the reverse in another. The books which are recommended to us to-day, will be superseded by others to-morrow. The system which is admirable on paper, when there are no obstacles to interfere with it, is found to be impracticable when an attempt is made to carry it out amid the interruptions of domestic life.

And this, perhaps, is likely to be one of the great defects of a regularly trained governess, who removes from the schoolroom in which she is a pupil, to that in which she is a mistress, without having had any intermediate experience. She has a system, a bed of Procrustes, and she imagines that by compelling children to fit themselves to it, they will necessarily become all that she desires. Therefore she goes through a certain course of study, makes them repeat certain lessons, and read certain histories, and never suspects that whilst some will come forth from her training well informed, others will remain, as they originally were, buried in ignorance.

And besides this, it must be remembered that no one person can really be expected to give advice upon all subjects connected with instruction. Each individual has his or her own province. If we wish to learn how we may the most easily teach a child of four years old its letters, we shall probably do well to apply to an infant schoolmistress. Arithmetic also is, as a rule, better taught in a boys' national school than in any private schoolroom.

French and German masters will know more about their own languages, and the best method of impart-

ing them, than any English person can do. A professor of history will give us a valuable list of historical books; a clergyman will tell us about catechizing and scriptural instruction. But when any single individual undertakes to teach all these things, or to give advice about them, we may be quite sure that the teaching and the advice will be not the best we could receive; but only that secondary guidance, the result of experience,—gained as much through failure as success,—which, though it may be very well when suggested in conversation between friends, is not at all fitted to be put forth to the world dogmatically. Looking at governesses as they are now —for the most part untrained, unprepared for their work of instruction—that which is most essential is that they should put their hearts into the duty committed to them, use their intellects to watch the effect of their plans, and not change those plans suddenly, even if they find that they fail to work quite successfully; for frequent change is a confession of weakness, and unsettles a child's mind.

And if, above and beyond the desire for their pupils' mental cultivation, there is a heartfelt desire for their moral and religious improvement, many a question will be at once answered which, though it may appear only to concern instruction, is in reality connected with education.

There is no royal road to learning; because God has appointed that, through the medium of learning, children should be trained in goodness, in obedience, energy, self-discipline—the qualities which are to fit them to be the soldiers of Christ in the great battle of the universe—the contest between good and evil.

To attempt, therefore, to cheat children into learning is to defeat the very purpose for which the task of learning is imposed upon them. It is of the sick child that the poet says—

> Cosi all' egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
> Di soave licor, gli orli del vaso;
> Succhi amari ingannato, intanto ei beve,
> E dall' inganno suo vita riceve.

The child in health, who is accustomed to accept the bitter only under the form of the sweet, receives not benefit, but injury. Perhaps the safest of all maxims for the training of a child of four years old is—that lessons should be lessons, and play should be play. The little creature who is sent to the nursery to have her hair brushed and her hands washed, and is then brought down to the schoolroom, and made to sit quite still, and attend to her tiny lessons, if only for ten minutes, has, through that rather troublesome process, learnt what is as much more important than reading and spelling, as moral training is to mere information. If she could have learnt ten times as much by scrambling on the floor, in a dirty pinafore, and playing with pictures, she would still have been the loser. What is the power of distinguishing A from B compared with obedience, reverence, self-restraint, the habit of attention?—all of which are enforced by the mere fact of being prepared each day at a certain hour for a regular lesson, and being compelled to go through it carefully.

So again, people ask, why be so particular in making little children say their lessons perfectly? If they know what they have learnt, if they give the

sense in other words, why is not that sufficient? The answer is as before, moral rather than intellectual. Because the sense can be acquired easily, the precise words only with difficulty; because exactness in repetition, involves carefulness; because it is a check upon that habit of hastily catching up words which is the bane of so many through their whole lives; because, moreover, it counteracts the tendency to be contented with something short of perfection, which is a most common temptation with us all. Who does not know what it is to strive to a certain point, and then fall short, from the feeling that there is not strength for one effort more? A lesson perfectly repeated must have required a moral effort, and it is that which is the real benefit. Though it may also be remarked that the moral powers are never strengthened without a gain also on the part of the intellectual; and that the lesson learnt according to the words of the book will, from the very effort it has cost, be remembered, when that which has been put into the child's own words will be forgotten. It is the fashion sometimes to depreciate the exercise of memory as being merely mechanical; but any one who has had to deal with young persons whose memory has been neglected will feel what an incalculable loss theirs is; and what an obstacle to their improvement in higher ways. Memory is indeed simply the act of heaping up treasures, not the power of making use of them; but if there are no treasures to use, the power becomes comparatively valueless. This does not, of course, imply that the mere perfect repetition of a form of words is sufficient, without any comprehension or explanation of

the sense; but merely that it should be the groundwork for explanation, and that the comprehension without it should not be accepted as sufficient.

We may sometimes be inclined to wonder how it was that in former days, when so much less pains were taken to open children's minds and to make them understand what they learnt, there should still have been such powerful and cultivated intellects in the world. The fact may probably be traced to the moral force which, in curious contrast to the paucity of the intellectual instruction, was in those days often exhibited, even under the form of prejudice and severity. We may, perhaps, have known cases ourselves in which the actual amount of information acquired under the strict discipline of an old-fashioned school, has been so small as to be almost absurd; and yet, looking back, we may perceive that the energy and self-discipline which were exerted to learn that little *well*, will have been, even intellectually, of such vast use in life, that the question of how much was actually learnt in childhood has become comparatively of no importance.

Repetition of some lessons, till they are known so that they are never forgotten, is another old-fashioned custom which has a moral benefit concealed beneath it. It creates a feeling of stability and permanence, and gives a sense of possession which is actual strength.

Any one fact which we know quite perfectly, and which we feel that we cannot forget, is a mental possession, valuable as the first treasure in the formation of a cabinet of curiosities. It may be made the germ of a collection of facts.

A child who can repeat perfectly the dates of the English kings is possessed of the nucleus of historical knowledge; and children unconsciously feel this. The power of arranging and comparing the historical events which they meet with in books depends upon having some certain event to fall back upon. When they find they have these facts thoroughly established in their minds they take a pleasure in making use of them. In this way an interest in history is awakened which might have lain dormant for ever, if the information acquired had been left in the brain in a state of confusion. And an interest in history is a moral as well as an intellectual benefit, because it widens the sphere of sympathy, enlarges the mind, and is a safeguard against the temptations of trashy literature. But apart from this, to know or do anything well is an advantage, especially for weak timid characters. If a little girl, for instance, develops no taste for accomplishments, and is so dull that she cannot be made to study, yet if she can work well with her needle, and the talent is cultivated, so that she is aware she is worth something, and has a power which others possess in a less degree, her whole moral being will be raised by the involuntary self-respect thus engendered. What we thoroughly understand we can speak of with decision and firmness; and the habit of decision in one case accustoms us to it in others.

But all this exactness and mechanical labour in acquisition, of which we have been speaking, must, if we are to make it endurable, begin early. The analogy between mental and moral training is very close. Little children will bear routine in lessons just as

they will bear strictness in discipline. It can be exercised on a small scale, and they will become accustomed to it insensibly. But if carried on too long, it will stunt them mentally, just as too rigid a restraint in conduct will stunt them morally.

Let a foundation of obedience and self-discipline be laid in early childhood, and freedom may be given in youth; and so also, make a child exact and perfect in its lessons when instruction begins; and, as time goes on, the habit of exact repetition may be, in a great measure, laid aside. Yet not entirely, even as obedience and external restraint may never wholly be given up. The exercise of memory should always be continued in some form. For as years go on, and we find that this faculty is weakened, we begin to appreciate its value, and to wish that we had made more use of it. Poetry learnt in youth is an invaluable treasure for life. The Collects, and a certain number of the Psalms, thoroughly acquired, will be a comfort unspeakable in sickness and age. Texts of Scripture are helps which we often actually long for, when ill or sorrowful ourselves, or when ministering to those who are suffering; and if we have not learnt them quite perfectly when young, we can never feel that they are ours, so as to make an easy use of them afterwards. Tell young people these things, give them a reason for insisting upon the use of memory, and being particular as to exactness, and they will acquiesce in the tasks imposed upon them. What they do not acquiesce in, is a routine of lessons to be repeated by rote, apparently for no purpose. The memory cultivated systematically, and upon principle, is one of the most important educational instruments

we possess. It is a kind of mental savings bank, into which we put our knowledge, with the certainty that, when drawn out again in future years, we shall receive it with interest. For the events of life, and the growth of the moral faculties, will increase, in some instances indefinitely, the value of intellectual knowledge. The twenty-third psalm learnt as a Sunday lesson in the schoolroom, and the same psalm repeated in dying ears—how vast is the difference! And yet but for the schoolroom lesson, the words might never suggest themselves so readily and perfectly as to be a support in such an hour of anguish and mental disturbance.

The whole value of early instruction, indeed, depends upon the use which can be made of it in after years. An evident truism, and yet singularly neglected, or misunderstood. For if it were not, why should we perplex ourselves, as we do, with discussions as to the comparative powers of boys and girls? What does it signify whether or not a girl is capable of the same mental work as her brothers? She is not meant to be a man, but a woman, with a woman's duties; and the best kind of education which can be given her, is that which will most obviously fit her for those duties. Suppose that she can understand political economy, and master the problems of Euclid; she will never sit in Parliament, or be a Cambridge Professor. And she has lessons of her own to attend to, and these things, except so far as they exercise the mental powers (and in this respect they may, no doubt, be helpful), can, at the best, only be adjuncts. She may learn them, they may be useful to her, just as a boy may learn drawing, or music,

and find such accomplishments profitable acquisitions, but even if she had a decided talent for them, she could never devote sufficient time to them, to enable her thoroughly to master them. The very utmost that will ever be said of her is, "she is surprisingly learned for a woman." The idea of making a boy's attainments the standard, by which to measure a girl's, is indeed obviously unfair. To render the comparison equal, boys should be required to play brilliantly on the piano, to sing well, to dance gracefully, to draw cleverly and with facility, to be skilled in every kind of needlework; for all these things are more or less required of girls, in addition to their intellectual acquirements; and they cannot be taught or learnt, unless time is devoted to them; and time given to one branch of instruction is so much taken from another. Yet, further, if there is to be any fair competition between the two sexes, a girl must have a boy's physical strength. It is very easy for studious men, who have never had to deal with delicate girls, to suggest a course of instruction, which shall bring them on a level with their brothers. There is no doubt that girls can, up to a certain point, be made to learn just as much, and as well, as boys. Take a school of little boys and little girls, and compare them, and the probability is that the latter will be found the superior. There is a quickness, a kind of intuitive perception about them, in which boys are wanting. They develop at an earlier age, and more rapidly. But take those same boys and girls at seventeen and eighteen, and the boy will have advanced far beyond the girl. Even in those things which he does not know, he will show a power of

ready acquirement, in which she will be wanting. Not one girl in a hundred would be able to work up the subjects required for an Indian Civil Service Examination, in the way which boys do. And for one very obvious reason, putting aside all others. Her health would break down under the effort. And health is the obstacle, which, even under the most favourable circumstances, must stand in the way of a girl's acquiring the intellectual strength, which, at this age, is so invaluable to a boy. He has been tossed about the world, left in a great measure to his own resources, and been inured to constant physical exertion. He has been riding, and boating, and playing cricket, and both body and mind have been roused to energy; and so, when he comes to study, he has a sense of power, which acts mentally as well as physically, and enables him to grasp difficulties, and master them. The girl, on the contrary, has been guarded from over fatigue, subject to restrictions with regard to cold, and heat, and hours of study, seldom trusted away from home, allowed only a small share of responsibility;—not willingly, with any wish to thwart her inclinations—but simply because, if she is not thus guarded, if she is allowed to run the risks, which, to the boy, are a matter of indifference, she will probably develop some disease, which, if not fatal, will, at any rate, be an injury to her for life.

This question of health must be a primary consideration with all persons who undertake to educate girls. It will be a perpetual interruption to their plans for study and mental improvement, but it is one which can never be put aside. Parents in

private, and the intellectual world in public, will demand that girls should be brought forward, and taught all that an age which makes intellect its idol thinks fit to require, and the attempt to satisfy them must be met in one or two ways. Either by the over mental exertion which ends in a break-up of health, or by a superficial intellectual show which resembles actual knowledge and moral power only as the veneered table resembles solid wood.

Any strain upon a girl's intellect is to be dreaded, and any attempt to bring women into competition with men can scarcely escape failure. And if this be so, and if, as has before been said, the value of a girl's acquirements can best be measured by a girl's necessities, by the needs of her after-life, then it is probable that women will know better than men what those needs are, and will therefore prove more suitable instructors. And yet an exception must, under certain limitations, be made to this assertion.

It will generally be found that a father's instruction, supposing him, of course, to be a man of intellect, is far more advantageous to a girl mentally than that of the very best governess she could have. There will be a peculiarity about it, a certain one-sidedness, some necessary things will be neglected, which must be acquired in after years; but under such teaching the mind does gain a largeness and strength which are too often wanting under that of a woman.

Does the fact bring us to a different general conclusion from that which we arrived at before?

It would seem not.

In the case under consideration, the instructor is a

father, and a father is less liable to the temptation to overwork his child, or to expect too much of her; so that under his care health is not likely to be sacrificed. By taking the education of his daughter into his own hands, he gives up the peculiarly feminine accomplishments. He makes her perhaps a first-rate historian, an excellent linguist, and a cautious thinker. But music, drawing, needlework, are considered secondary. Experience shows him that young people cannot learn everything, and he chooses the studies in which he desires his child to excel, and is successful. And with good cause. He has everything to aid him. Absolute authority, the reverence which is naturally his due, the affection which makes it a pleasure to work for him. And yet, after all, he feels that there is something wanting, and after a time he sends his daughter to school, to be under the influence of a person in all probability greatly inferior to himself, because she needs a woman's influence.

Well trained, well informed though she is, she is not feminine, and a woman who is not feminine is a monster in creation.

Under the very best circumstances, therefore, the teaching of a man is not, as it would appear, all that a girl requires.

But if women could discover the secret of the power which, in the case under consideration, is wielded by a father, they might perhaps do something towards acquiring it themselves.

A clever man—one who has thought as well as studied—will almost always make his knowledge tell more than a woman, from the fact that he has mixed

more in the world, and, therefore, knows better how to turn his information to account by bringing it to bear upon the present day. He has seen more, noted and compared more, and his interests are on a larger scale. If he reads ancient history, for instance, it is not simply as a record of the past, but as an influence which has come down to modern times. If he reads modern history, he connects it with the politics of his own period. Facts are to him not mere facts, but the materials for thought. And thus it is, that whilst he is instructing his child by reading with her, he is educating her by talking with her; whereas, a governess will, too often, be contented with the former, and quite put aside the latter. The father is, himself, interested in the subject of study, and he communicates his interest to his child; and the governess, if she is to compete with him, must do the same.

To teach well, we must be learning at the same time. There must be a feeling of sympathy between the instructor and the scholar, based upon the fact that both are travelling upon the same road, only that one has advanced rather farther than the other. It is in this way that a young governess, though conscious of her own deficiencies, may hopefully undertake the task of education. If she will only study with her pupil, as well as teach her, she will, perhaps, in the end, do quite as much towards forming the mind as a person of distinguished attainments could.

Governesses are sometimes afraid of confessing themselves ignorant upon any point. They think that if they do they will lose their pupils' respect;

and so they have recourse to little subterfuges which a child's quick eye will almost invariably discover. An exercise, for instance, will be corrected by the aid of a key, only the key must not be seen. Yet when such assistance is openly acknowledged, it will be found that the child receives it as a matter of course, without any surprise; and the only thing the governess has then to guard against is putting the book in her pupil's way, so as to be a temptation. This does not require any mystery or locking up, but merely keeping it apart from other school books. The child's sense of honour must be trusted for everything beyond this. There are very few cases in which it will be found to fail; if it should, it is far better that such a tendency should be discovered and corrected, than left to work out its fatal course in after life. Truth, sincerity! there is, in fact, no other foundation for good education.

And even apart from this consideration, acknowledgment of ignorance or doubt need not necessarily be injurious. To say to a child, "I do not know such a thing, but I will find it out;" and to set the example of searching, and not being contented until the point in dispute is discovered; is a lesson tenfold more important to a young girl's mind than any fact or series of facts can possibly be. It is setting before her what she must be resolved to do in after life, if she is ever to be really well informed. For the truth, which all persons who are interested in female education must, sooner or later, acknowledge, is, that at the age at which girls are taken from the schoolroom, and introduced into the world, their education, instead of being completed, has only just,

to any real purpose, begun; and that if they have not the energy and good sense to carry it on for themselves, in spite of all the interruptions which throng them, they must eventually forget one-half of what they have learnt, and be incapable of making any satisfactory use of the other half.

Again, we must place the boy of eighteen and the girl of the same age side by side, and inquire in what light society regards them.

The boy of eighteen is only just beginning his college career. He is not yet fit for any profession; he has several years of hard study to go through before he can be a clergyman, a physician, a barrister, before, in fact, he can ordinarily undertake any independent responsible position. What he knows now is the foundation for what he is to know and carry out hereafter.

The girl of eighteen is ready to be married, to become the mistress of a household, to control servants, to bring up children, to take a definite place in society. All that she has learnt in the schoolroom, instead of being improved and made useful, may now be put aside. She is *finished*. So much history, so much geography, so many dates, so much arithmetic acquired; and to be laid by, like jewels in a box, to be taken out when wanted. Being *finished*, of course she has enough. If she should happen to have a taste for these things, she may collect more at leisure; but there is no real necessity for it. When married to the world (as how many young girls are married to it—pledged to "love, honour, and obey" it!) she was provided with her intellectual *trousseau*, and it will last her for some

years at least; and when it is worn out she will be able to replace it by that knowledge of life, that *savoir faire* which covers a mine of ignorance.

False! utterly false! And yet, if a girl is taught to look upon the day when she leaves the schoolroom as the day of emancipation, how can she think otherwise? It is not she who is to blame, but the parents and teachers—the former, perhaps, more than the latter. For any governess who is worthy the name, and really has her pupils' interests at heart, will sigh over the shortcomings which she has no time to remedy; and urge, with an earnestness which will probably meet with very little sympathy, that education is a condition of life, and that the years spent in the schoolroom have been but its first stage; that information is nothing, and cultivation of the mind everything; and that, next to religious principle, there is no moral safeguard equal to that of a steady determination, if possible, to let no day pass without having done something towards such cultivation.

And the mother will agree to all this in theory. But how is it too often in practice? The world's joys are dangled before the young daughter's imagination as the glittering bauble is dangled before the eyes of an infant. To be introduced into society—or, as it is called, to "come out;"—to be presented at Court, perhaps, and enjoy the rush of a London season; and eventually to be married to a man of rank, wealth, and—of course, if possible!—of high character, these are the things hinted at—produced, as it were, like choice treasures, tempting morsels, to stimulate the worldly appetite. In preparation for these delights,

there must necessarily be accomplishments, music especially. It is the one grand desideratum, for music is showy—every one talks of and notices a girl who plays and sings beautifully; and therefore before everything else so many hours a day must be devoted to music. French, too, is quite necessary, though unfortunately it is very seldom thoroughly acquired without a residence abroad; and as the world is rather linguistic-mad at this time, German, too, must be learnt. But thoroughness in German is not requisite. To be able to ask for what is needed at a German *table d'hôte* is sufficient to enable a girl to say she knows German, and the saying is all which is required. Italian, too, is desirable—it is such a graceful, sweet-sounding language; but here again it is the appearance which is of importance. The world does not exactly expect Italian, though it looks favourably upon it. If the words of an Italian song can be pronounced it is satisfied, whether they are understood or not. But the world is literary and scientific, as well as accomplished; and therefore into the interstices left by the accomplishments are to be inserted all those duller, less showy acquirements, which, like the literary *padding* of a review, serve to fill out the educational volume to its fitting size. Still, like the accomplishments, they are not to be valued for themselves, but only for the effect they may produce; and as they will be required for immediate use when the young lady is "introduced," they must be got up for the occasion, at the shortest notice, and on the most approved fashion.

Very hard work all this requires; but then it is only for a short time. A year or two more, and then

it will all be over! The fortune will be made, and nothing more will be required but to spend it—or rather to invest it to the greatest profit. The dear children are urged to be diligent—to make the best use of their time; they are assured they will have no more such opportunities; and if dispirited by the strain put upon them, they are sympathized with. "Lessons are very trying, and discipline is detestable, and they must exert all their high principle to bear with it." And so the children do bear with it, as the ox submits to the yoke, and the horse to the halter; but they never cease to feel that it is a yoke, and to sigh for the day when they are to be freed from it. And the governesses feel the yoke too. Accomplishments and information are expected to be ready by a certain hour, and if they cannot produce the reality, they must at least be prepared with a well got-up sham. They cannot consult the tastes or powers of their pupils, because that hardest of all tyrants, the world, insists that young girls shall know certain things, or else they shall not be accepted as well educated. Perhaps at the present moment it is in vain to endeavour to stem the tide. It may be better to sail with it. Parents will not be contented unless there is something to *show* in their children's education; and though they expect them to learn a great deal more than it is possible to learn thoroughly in the time given, there is no alternative but to follow out their wishes. The various acquirements must be attempted, and the only thing to be done is to point out to the children, and to urge upon them, with all possible earnestness, that school-time is only seed-time; and, as has been said before, if they do not

carry on their own education when they leave the schoolroom, the seed will never spring up and bear fruit.

If this idea can be thoroughly rooted in their minds, the fact of beginning so many studies may even be turned to good. For to know the first steps of any science or language will often lead to its being pursued; whereas if those steps had never been taken, the study would never have been attempted. In like manner, a little music, and a little drawing, though very unsatisfactory to persons who wish to make a show with them, may be invaluable as resources to the individual. It is not the small amount of any knowledge, or the absence of facility in an accomplishment, which is to be lamented, but the looking upon the labour of learning as completed when it is only just begun.

And if governesses will only bear this in mind, and act upon the idea that their business is less to educate their pupils, than to lead them to educate themselves, they will be saved much of the vexation which must arise from the sense of the incompleteness of their work. In some few cases a governess has the training of a child from infancy, and is able fully to pursue her own plans, but this is very rarely the case. As a general rule, a child has, from various circumstances, several governesses, and each can only carry out her own ideas, whatever they may be, to a certain point. So it will happen continually that the actual amount of instruction which any one individual is able to give, will be provokingly small; but if she has been able to awaken interest in the subject taught, she has conferred on

her pupil a very great benefit, and the deficient information will be supplied in after years. Conversation upon the subjects of the lessons is one of the surest modes of awakening interest, and it is in this way that much is lost by the numbers who congregate at the dinner-table in a large school, and are compelled when they speak to express themselves in a foreign tongue. The restriction may be a very necessary safeguard against the tumult which would ensue if twenty or thirty girls were allowed to chatter indiscriminately; and it may teach them the French or German for mutton and beef; but free discussion of some subject which has been suggested during the morning's study, when carried out by a small party having the use of their mother-tongue, will do infinitely more for the improvement of the mind. It will show to young people the use of their lessons, the value of conversation; it will make them appreciate the society of persons of sense and information; and when they have once acquired a taste for superior society, they will never sink down to the level of the shallow, gossiping, slanderous world. Historical questions are often quite exciting, when brought forward in this way, and the foreign politics of the day may be a continual subject of interest.

Only one caution must be given. There must be no effort in such conversation, no talking for effect. The young detest this quite as much as their elders, perhaps more.

In order to make useful conversation agreeable, the person who leads it must be really interested in it; and when this is the case, a little ignorance on the part of the governess is often no disadvantage,

because it brings her down to a more sympathizing level, and enables her to show how knowledge may be acquired.

Neither may it be forgotten that young persons—indeed all persons—require complete definite relaxation just as much as they do definite instruction; and the cultivation of a sense of humour, and a refined perception of the ludicrous, can no more be omitted as parts of good education than languages and science. A sense of the ludicrous is in fact really necessary as a safeguard against unnumbered mistakes which persons fall into who have excellent intentions, but fail to perceive the fitness, and right proportion, and relation, of the persons and things with which they are brought in contact. To be able to take part in a light, merry, witty conversation, and yet never to go beyond the bounds of reverence, kindness, and propriety, is a gift which comparatively few persons possess, and it is certainly most heartily to be desired. If, making no provision for this need, we think it necessary to be always teaching, we shall end by dulling instead of sharpening our pupils' intellects. And we can never remedy the deficiency of real mirth and fun by dressing up information and calling it amusement. A very pleasant lesson is a very dreary play.

With this view of arousing interest, and making lessons pleasant, it may perhaps be advisable to take rather a less rigid view of the course of study to be pursued, especially with regard to history. Certain main facts, and dates it has been said, must be thoroughly impressed in the memory, as the pegs on which to suspend others. If this is neglected, the

ground of the mind will be strewed with knowledge, important in itself; but, from the confusion in which it lies, almost as useless as rubbish. These main facts ought to be acquired in early childhood. But when this is past, it is often supposed necessary to begin some standard work, consisting probably of some four or five thick volumes. Now any one who is at all acquainted with the routine of a young girl's schoolroom life, will know that months and months will be needed to go through these volumes. So many other things are to be attended to, that it is quite impossible to give up more than a small portion of the day, and that probably not every day, to this special book. For there are other histories to be studied—Greece and Rome, Egypt and Assyria—the whole of modern Europe in general, and the principal countries in detail. Few girls of fourteen and fifteen know more than the merest shadowy outline of universal history; and if they are intelligent and interested in their studies, they are eager to know more. And thus the lengthy work, though it may be in itself clever and interesting, becomes irksome. The thread of the history is too often interrupted, and it is drawn out to too great a length. The young people wish to finish the book, merely in order that they may say they have read it. And if, as is very often the case in schools, the whole period of a pupil's residence is but a year, or a year and a half, it is evident that in this way nothing like a real interest in history generally is likely to be awakened. The impression left upon the mind is that of dulness; and when emancipated from the schoolroom, history

will very likely be put aside. But if the study of history could be brought before the mind in shorter portions, and, with the help of extracts from standard writers, be made to embrace larger interests, a different result might be expected.[1]

Such discursive reading as this will not enable a young girl to give a satisfactory answer to the question, What have you read? or, what are you reading? Should such an inquiry be made, she would probably reply, "We read bits of different books just as it happens," and the answer might sound unsatisfactory; but there is very little doubt that the interest in these historical subjects, awakened by such varied and contemporary reading, would be tenfold greater than if the history of any one nation had been read for months, through the medium of five or six thick octavo volumes; and by degrees, as the mind enlarged, those deeper and more philosophical writers would be read with an appreciation which would be utterly impossible, if they had made part of the schoolroom routine.

It may, probably, be urged as an obstacle to this suggestion, that many persons have not the books they need at command; but if the principle is acknowledged, there will always be some means of carrying it out. If one author is not at hand, another is. Even regular school books may be

[1] An illustration of what is meant may be given from books taken at random. The History of England must, to an Englishman, be the thread on which he is to string the history of other countries. Some School Compendium may be taken, and

made use of, so as to give variety and interest by reading contemporary reigns; whilst the best magazines and reviews often contain essays of the greatest value upon historical subjects. If a governess has it really at heart to interest her pupils, she will be constantly picking up, as it were, suggestions as to books, and poetry, and tales, which may be made useful; and the variety of the authors bringing out their various views of the events and the persons they describe, will give rise to conversation, not only agreeable and exciting, but which will throw a light upon the children's characters, and be a material help in the formation of their principles.

And so with regard to geography. A discussion upon the foreign political events of the day will necessarily lead to geographical questions. When

the Life of William the Conqueror read; this will be an introduction to Lanfranc and his Life in Dr. Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops;" and this again will lead to the eventful history of Gregory the Seventh, which will be found in a most fascinating form in Sir James Stephen's Essays. If Dean Milman's "Latin Christianity" should be at hand, most valuable extracts may also be made from it, though it is a work too voluminous for the generality of young people, and which from its details it is not desirable to put into their own hands. From this will arise the question of the settlement of the Normans in Italy, of which a short graphic account will be found in a regular school-book, Miss Yonge's "Landmarks of History" (the Middle Ages), whilst still further light may be thrown upon the period by the very interesting and most useful papers by the same author, called "Cameos of History," which are to be met with in the well-known periodical called *The Monthly Packet;* to say nothing of Miss Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England," which tell almost all that can be told of the domestic life and habits of English Royalty.

all Europe interests itself in the affairs of Italy, the map of modern Italy, as compared with the Italy of the middle ages, becomes an engrossing study. Or, again, when the probable fate of Denmark and Schleswig Holstein is a subject introduced into every drawing-room, the map of Denmark and Germany becomes an object of almost personal importance. There must, of course, be regular lessons independent of these episodes. Young people must know what they have to do, and be made to do it; but it is by seizing upon the events transacting at the present moment, and connecting them with the past, that interest is awakened; and this, it must be repeated, is the great object of female instruction.

A boy requires a definite amount of information to enable him to pass a certain examination. He may or may not afterwards follow up the subjects proposed. His path in life is marked out, and probably he will devote himself only to those studies which bear upon it. But a woman's mind needs a more general cultivation. She is to be her husband's companion and friend, to entertain his guests, to be sensible and agreeable, to raise the tone of conversation, and she can only be and do all this, by having that general acquaintance with history, geography, and science, which will enable her to draw out the knowledge that men possess. A woman who declaims, instructs, or preaches in society, has forgotten her vocation, and is utterly out of place; but when she makes use of her own sense and information to make others talk well, her influence is of inestimable use.

Public and private lectures will also aid greatly in the general cultivation of mind of which we have been speaking; but they will lose nearly all their value, unless a groundwork of information has been previously laid, and pains are taken to imprint the facts of the lecture upon the memory after it has been heard. Private lectures should always be accompanied with examination questions upon the subject that has been treated of. It is singular how very little definite information may be derived from oral instruction, even when a clear impression of its general purpose may be retained. At first this impression will be taken for knowledge; but it will be found to vanish too speedily to be worthy of the name, unless it is imprinted upon the memory by some personal mental effort. These general suggestions; with regard to instruction considered apart from education, are all which it seems needful to give. The materials with which, and upon which, a governess (especially in a private family) is required to work, must vary continually, and if bound down to a certain system, she will be entirely thrown out by the loss of the instruments with which she has been accustomed to work, and the variety of minds which she is expected to influence. Experience and observation, especially if aided by suggestions from persons who are well practised in some peculiar branch of study, will do far more for a governess than any system; for they will show not all that can be done with the best helps—books of reference, intellectual society, first-rate masters and mistresses for accomplishments;—but the good that

may be obtained by just taking what is placed within reach, and by personal energy and earnestness rousing the young intellect, and exciting the interest, so that when greater advantages are bestowed, greater profit may be derived from them.

CONCLUSION.

ALL that has been said, both upon education and instruction, has been founded upon the idea that governesses are really putting their hearts into their duty, and not merely going through it as a drudgery from which they are longing to escape.

Whether this is the case or not, each must answer for herself. But, supposing it to be so, supposing the work to be thus undertaken for God, and carried on with all the ability which He has bestowed, what is the reward to be expected?

In the great majority of instances, more or less, Disappointment. It is better to own it: better to read the word which God has inscribed upon all human efforts. So far as they are human: so far as their object is to be fulfilled in this world, we shall never thoroughly attain that for which we labour.

We set an ideal before our eyes; we work for it by day and night; we bend all the powers of our mind to its completion; and God, in the ordering of His Providence, is constantly permitting thwarting influences to cross our path: influences which seem to us, perhaps, unmitigated evil; which check and harass us, and undo our work, and cut it short; and at length it may be He takes it finally out of our

hands, so that we are not able to perceive that it has in any true sense been work at all.

And why?

Surely, because the truth which the parent has to own in the nursery is one which the governess has to recognize in the schoolroom. As we begin, so we must continue, and end, by acknowledging that God has a scheme of education beyond ours,—a purpose, vast, unfathomable, hidden in the Mysteries of the Universe; that He commands us to work for Him with the materials which He gives us—that He points out by the instrumentality of nature, reason, and revelation, what this work is to be; but that He does not tell us the end which is ultimately to be reached; and, therefore, when He takes from us the materials with which we desire to labour, or changes our occupation, or puts a stop to it, or even suffers it to appear null and void, He is not really thwarting us, but only carrying out this great hidden scheme by the means which, in His Almighty Wisdom, He sees will most surely conduce to its accomplishment.

We can never remind ourselves of this truth too frequently or too earnestly.

God's Will is one thing, God's Purpose is another. We obey God's Will when, in simple faith, we set ourselves "to do our duty in that state of life to which He has called us." Having done this, we may commit our efforts to Him and rest satisfied. Successful or unsuccessful, as regards ourselves, it matters not. Or rather we can never be unsuccessful. We may fail in influence, we may see our most cherished hopes shipwrecked, but the work done for God is accepted and stored up by God. It will,

hereafter, be acknowledged before angels and men, and through the ages of Eternity the echo of those blessed words of approbation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," will ring as sweetly in the ear of him who on earth missed his object, as in the ear of him who attained it.

But we are human; we grow weak without encouragement; we are chilled at heart by constant failure. Is there not some way by which we may secure to ourselves an earthly as well as a heavenly reward? Undoubtedly there is; but the first thing to be done with this view is to guard against expecting too much.

We must remember that we cannot demand of the young a consistency and earnestness which we have failed to acquire ourselves. If, as we must all know, life has been to us a school of severe discipline, and nevertheless we are still miserably faulty, it is folly to suppose that those who are only at the beginning of their course can possibly be perfect. And yet this is really the kind of expectation which very good people sometimes seem to cherish. They fret, and fume, and vex themselves because they are obliged to repeat the same warning again and again; because words seem to make no impression; because the simplest, easiest commands are disobeyed. It is very vexatious, extremely trying; but how is it between themselves and God? What careless habits, petty faults—negligence, inattention—not to speak of sins of graver character—has not God been warning them against for years; and still they give way to them; and still He is patient. Our Blessed Lord taught His disciples during the whole of His minis-

terial life that His Kingdom was not of this world; and yet, after being spectators of His Death and witnesses to His Resurrection, they asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" We do not hear that He was impatient with them for their question. He reminded them, as He had done before, that it was not for them "to know the times or the seasons which God had put into His own power;" and then He cheered them by encouragement.

Patience and Hope! Nothing can be done in education without these virtues. Youth is the seed-time, not the harvest. If we expect to reap in the seed-time, we must be disappointed.

But it is also very important to be prepared for the sources from which disappointment will be derived, and these it may be as well, before concluding, to consider.

And first we must, in some form or other, inevitably be disappointed in ourselves. The assertion seems almost a truism, so willing are we all to acknowledge that it is impossible to come up to our own ideal standard. And yet, strange to say, moral deficiencies are not those which press the most heavily upon persons who attempt, in earnest dependence upon God's help, to educate the young. Whatever our faults may be, a constant check is kept upon them when we know that we are called upon to set an example. They who are really striving to walk in God's ways must be able, to a great extent, to control the outward exhibitions of temper, pride, vanity, and selfishness before the young. Reverence for a child is a strong instinct in the human breast,

and it is peculiarly cultivated by the spirit of Christianity. If the one object of our lives is to do our Lord's work on earth, we can never forget His awful warning, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."[1] No doubt the lesser faults of hastiness, procrastination, unpunctuality, indolence, forgetfulness, or even involuntary coldness or absence of manner, will occasionally fret ourselves, and work injuriously for our pupils; but the remedy for these defects lies, to a certain extent, in our own power. Leaning upon God, and exerting our own will, we may hope eventually to neutralize their effects, even if we do not succeed in entirely overcoming them. But mental deficiencies are not equally within our grasp, and the moment we test our acquirements by teaching we find how shallow they are. Natural incapacity for certain branches of knowledge, carelessness in earlier years, want of a sure foundation, absence of opportunities for instruction, have, in all probability, each or all, left their mark upon us. If we can do a few things well, we do a great many other things badly; if we know a little, we are ignorant of much; and in the act of blaming our pupils, we shall often be much more inclined to blame ourselves.

Notwithstanding this self-dissatisfaction, we may, however, be by no means actually incompetent teachers. Power of mind, energy, the love of knowledge, and a determination to seek for it, are

[1] St. Matt. xviii. 6.

the really efficacious instruments of instruction. If we possess these, we shall manage to make more use of our small knowledge, than a much better informed person would, without them, make of his or her large knowledge.

But the secret consciousness of the deficiency will continually be present with us; all the more if we happen to be placed in a position of responsibility, and are supposed to know, and to be able to do everything.

And the remedy for this evil can scarcely be said to be within our reach. In the middle of life, and in the full tide of work and anxiety, there is neither the time nor the spirit necessary for much effective study. And even supposing the contrary, there will, most frequently, be something wanting in the faculties which are our instruments for acquiring knowledge.

If we omitted to learn the dates of the English kings when we were ten, we shall scarcely be able to acquire them when we are forty. And, though we may find our matured intellect very helpful when we wish to grasp the meaning of a German sentence, we shall long for the clearness and exactitude of a youthful memory, when we are called upon to master the German declensions.

It is the foundation which is so needful—and it is this which can only be laid in youth.

Unimportant as such mental deficiencies may seem to those who look on, the perception of them is very harassing when we are actually engaged in teaching; and a morbid yielding to regret on account of them, may be really paralyzing to our intellectual vigour.

In such cases, the only thing to be done is to accept our ignorance even as we do our poverty, and since God has pointed out that it is our business to teach, to do the best we can, and trust to His blessing upon the result.

But next to our own deficiencies, a great source of disappointment will be those of the persons who work with us. For scarcely any governess undertakes to educate entirely alone. If she is in a private family, indeed, she may do so for some years; but after that time masters will generally be called in to assist her. But in a school, or even with a few private pupils, this assistance must almost always be required. And it will never be quite what is needed; often it will be much the reverse; and we shall find our best plans upset simply because we cannot prevail upon others to do as we wish. And one requirement will continually be sacrificed to another. It will often be necessary to put up with the absence of talent for the sake of good principle; or again, we may be compelled to accept something which, if not bad, is at any rate inferior in principle, for the sake of some particular talent. These things are most vexatious. They act positively as well as negatively. As a bad nurse will do injury in the nursery which the wisest of mothers cannot undo, so it will be in the schoolroom. And this is the reason why the moral tone of large schools is often so unsatisfactory, notwithstanding the possible superiority of the lady at the head. She is obliged to delegate her authority to subordinates who are inferior, and as they are more constantly with the children, their influence necessarily acts in the end more powerfully. And

again, there is health, a most frequent trial and source of disappointment. We could do so much more if we had only physical strength! If we could rise earlier, and sit up later, and work more continuously, and did not need so much relaxation! Persons who are entering with anything like enthusiasm upon a career of usefulness never sit down to consider the obstacles likely to arise from their not having herculean powers. Perhaps it is as well they should not, or they would probably never attempt to be useful at all; and God will help them, and enable them often to do more than they could possibly have calculated upon beforehand. But it is, nevertheless, desirable to remember generally, that interruptions from want of health and strength must be expected; because we shall then be less troubled when they arise, but shall look upon them as Providential arrangements, pointing out God's Will for us, and reminding us that active duties are not the only ones which He demands of us, but that "they also serve who stand and wait."

Again—there must frequently be very great disappointment from the varieties of character and intellect which are subject to our influence. We use the same efforts for all, and, at first, are apt to expect the same results. But we shall soon find out our mistake, especially when we desire to improve the mind and excite a taste for study.

We may make young people learn, but strive as we will we cannot make them like learning. There are, indeed, many persons, both young and old, by no means dull in intellect, to whom reading is such a task that they will never undertake it except as a

duty. They pick up information in some singular way of their own, but a book is a thing scarcely ever seen in their hands. It is very disappointing to find that this apparent indifference to study is the end of our labours. It seems, at first, that they have been thrown away, but we must remember that, after all, reading is only a means to an end. If the mind is awake to what is passing around it, and if right principles are rooted in it, information will be acquired, and useful work will be done, though it may not be in the way of study. Young people who can scarcely be induced to read, will often be most sensible and useful in other ways. They will be pleasant in their homes, and visit the poor, and tend the sick; and in God's sight these labours are, doubtless, quite as important as studying Schiller or Dante; though it must not be forgotten, that mental work is necessary for the balance of character, and, therefore, reading in some form, and to a certain degree, ought always to be urged upon young people, though we cannot really excite their interest in it. In this, as in every case, our disappointment is the result of a mistaken aim. We put our own wishes in the place of God's manifest intention, and so, instead of taking the materials He has given us, and doing the best we can with them, in the mode which nature points out; we decide for ourselves what children ought to be, and then set to work to make them such; without troubling ourselves to ask whether God has placed the means of doing so within our reach.

This must not be interpreted to imply that

children should never be made to learn anything for which they have not a decided bias, for there is a certain amount of general information which is needful for all; and when once the first difficulties are mastered, an interest will constantly be aroused in studies, which at the beginning were almost disliked. But it does imply that it is no use to battle against decided tastes, or (after a certain effort has been made to conquer them) against decided distastes. Children often dislike the trouble of learning music; yet some knowledge of it is so useful that it is by no means wise to give way at once to the fancy; but if there is really no ear and no musical faculty, the time and money bestowed upon the acquirement of music are absolutely lost. These things are matters of observation. In childhood, therefore, we have to watch, and examine, and find out what the natural inclinations and powers are; but in youth we can only accept them, and do our utmost to train them in a right direction, and make them useful in the way which God has appointed. When we have done this we have nothing to reproach ourselves with; and there need be no disappointment, although the character and pursuits may be wholly unlike what we had pictured to ourselves as desirable.

And once more, as a source of disappointment, there are too often home influences—influences which, whether good or evil, are so strong, that after long experience most governesses will probably arrive at the general conclusion that the pupils who come from good homes, would have been good without

their efforts; and those who come from unsatisfactory homes will scarcely ever be anything but unsatisfactory, even with them.

A private governess must indeed be so alive to the power of this domestic influence that, supposing it to be injurious, it can scarcely be a matter of disappointment, though it may be a great vexation to find that she is unable to make head against it. But she has one advantage—she can throw herself into it, and work in a measure with it. And she can understand her pupils' trials and temptations, and guard them against them; whereas the governess who receives pupils in her own house is comparatively ignorant of their difficulties. She knows only what she is told, and it is next to impossible to give good advice upon one-sided information.

So it is that young people who are troublesome and wilful at home, will often be amiable and agreeable away from it, and will even develop really charming qualities, and appear to act upon religious principles; and yet, when they return home, the old faults will show themselves again as if they had never been corrected. It must not be thought from this fact that no good has been effected by the school training. The faults do indeed exhibit themselves in a very disappointing way; but they will not do so now, as they did probably heretofore, without a strong check from conscience. The child may do wrong, but she is no longer ignorant of it; and there will be an inward struggle in consequence, which, though it may fail to result in any marked improvement at the time, is the beginning of the

effort which is to last through life, and, through God's help, must be finally victorious.

But the disappointment is unquestionably great to the governess. To strive, and pray, and warn, and entreat, and to believe that God's blessing has so rested upon our efforts that the heart is really touched, and the work will be permanent; and then to find that it is apparently nothing more than the effect of extraneous influences; is so disappointing that it almost tempts us to distrust all outward appearances. Certainly, it tends to make an earnest mind very cautious as to subjecting the young for a continuance to what may be called the excitements and luxuries of religion, likely as they are to produce a semblance of good, ending in self-deceit. Where there is actual unreality the heart is fatally injured, and it may require years of suffering and bitter experience to restore it to simplicity. But in very many cases there is no unreality, only the principle is young and weak, and requires support; and when the scenes and circumstances in which it is to be exercised are untoward, it seems for a time to fail.

But it is only seeming—only for a time. We must ever remember that the result of our labours can never be estimated in this life, and therefore to judge of our work by its apparent success is most surely to open the door to discouragement. In the Day when all things are revealed, we shall see and know better; and in that Day, as we shall have to bear the sight of the consequences of our sins and neglect, so shall we also be gladdened by seeing the consequences of our efforts for good. The seed

which is now buried in a hard dry soil will, when the ground is harrowed by affliction, or by some other discipline of God's Providential grace, spring up and bear fruit. We may never know it in this life, but we shall know it after death. And in the mean time we may safely trust our work in God's Hands, with the certainty that if even the cup of cold water, given in the name of Jesus, shall not lose its reward, much less shall the "word spoken in season," or the watchful care exercised when none was near to notice or to praise.

And assuredly there is, in many cases, a reward even on earth. It may not come to us in the form which we have pictured to ourselves;—there, where our hearts were most centred, the blight may fall witheringly;—but it will sometimes be given in cases in which we could least have anticipated it.

In so far as we have in any way been permitted to strengthen the young heart, and guide it on its Christian course, it will look to us with a loving gratitude, which will bind it to us to its latest day. Earth's bereavements are many, but the gap which death makes, life—the life of the young—can in a measure fill up. If when that life is given into our hands to cherish and train for Heaven, we carry on our work in dependence upon God's grace, the tie is no longer natural, but spiritual. The life becomes one with ours, to remain united with ours for ever. Though scattered over the face of the earth—perchance in other lands, perchance in scenes and circles removed from our own, yet those whom we have tended for God and led to Him will still turn to us as their best and truest friends; and whilst these

interests are secured to us there can be no lasting dreariness, no real loneliness. Travelling, as we trust we are ourselves, towards Heaven, we shall watch with a satisfaction which no mere human bond can inspire the course of the young who thus belong to us, and are following us. Their joys will be in a measure our joys, their sorrows our sorrows. The brief moments of meeting will from time to time renew their eager sympathies, and recall the first freshness of their young affections. Others may indeed be nearer and dearer, but none can go back to the days "lang syne gone by"—and be to them what we have been. What the importance of those memories may be, we may not venture to imagine. Each separate soul has its own secret history, and God alone can tell how far any single influence has been used as the means through which His Grace has effected its conversion; but of one fact we may be certain, that of all the influences which surround the young there is none so powerful, so abiding, as that of thorough, devoted, Christian earnestness. Only give them faith in this—only convince them that it exists; and we have provided them with a shield for their future life, the value of which will only be appreciated at its close.

The half-heartedness, the lukewarmness, the inconsistency of the professing Christian world it is, which drives the young to indifference, and too often to scepticism. There is a mournful, a most heart-sickening confession, which perhaps it may have been ours to hear from the lips of one whom we have sent forth to face the battle of life—"I have lost all confidence in goodness. The people whom I meet

are heartless; I see no high principle. I can scarcely realize its existence. It is in vain to struggle against the current, and therefore I go with it."

One cure is to be found for that terrible distrust. A recall to the scenes of former holy joys and the society of friends, the evidence of whose sincerity cannot be doubted.

The sight or the memory of one holy life will then be a shield against unbelief, from which the darts of Satan will fall powerless. To behold "how a Christian can die" is a great privilege; but to behold how a Christian can live is a yet greater one. And it is this shield, this inestimable safeguard, which it is in the power, as it is the paramount duty, of every one to whose guardianship the Redeemer has confided the young, to provide.

Once let us be told that our efforts have not been in vain;—once let us hear it said, "But for you I should never have known the reality of religion. The example of your life made me feel what it is to give the heart to God;" and we may exclaim, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," for on earth we shall have had our reward, and no purer joy will here be awaiting us.

Yet more will that reward be intensified if it shall have been secured to us by the irrevocable seal of death.

No risk of change! No dread of future temptations! No fear of backsliding! But the soul—the spirit we loved so dearly—the heart which responded to our's so tenderly—safe—safe for ever!

To God be the glory, as to us will be the joy. Precious beyond all other treasures are those which

we have thus given to His care, and loving is the watch which in Paradise He keeps over them.

Their home is a home of waiting rest—of peace unutterable. A time will soon come—God grant it!—when we shall join them there; and when the long twilight day is ended, and the Morning of the Resurrection breaks upon us, once more we shall be permitted to claim them for our own; as in the sight of angels and of saints we bow before the Throne of the Redeemer, and in humblest thankfulness say, "Lord, here are we, and the children whom Thou hast given us."

THE END.

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